A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. DR. SAMUEL CHANDLER:

FROM THE WRITER OF

THE HISTORY OF THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

——— *Procul ô procul eſte Profani,*
Conclamat Vates, totoque abſiſtite luco.

VIRGIL.

The Simple believeth every word: but the Prudent Man looketh well to his going. PROVERBS. xiv. 15.

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A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. DR. SAMUEL CHANDLER.

SIR,

SOON after the appearance of the Hiſtory of the Man after God's own Heart; a rumour ſpread abroad that you intended a reply to it. A circumſtance for which the writer of it was far from being ſorry: as he concluded a defence of the character of king David from ſo confeſſedly able a hand, would greatly tend to illuſtrate the real merits or demerits of that celebrated monarch, whoſe life and actions have been the ſubjects of ſuch variety of oppoſite conſtructions. Eager to learn what you, Sir, had to ſay, in oppoſition to what was advanced by him, he made frequent enquiry as opportunity offered, when your anſwer was to appear? Nobody knew certainly; but every one, acquainted with your former writings, ventured to predict the complexion of it: your friends were afraid that 'the

'Doctor would be too warm;' while thoſe, not ſo well affected perhaps to your ſide of the queſtion, declared with leſs reſerve, excuſe the repetition, that 'come when it might, he would ſcold 'like a fiſhwoman.' The writer himſelf, not having read any of your former productions, except the ſermon which gave riſe to this controverſy, was naturally led to conclude, that a proteſtant divine, long exerciſed in the profeſſion of the Goſpel, muſt have profited ſo much by the meek ſpirit which it ſo manifeſtly inculcates, as to manage a literary diſpute (eſpecially) with diſtinguiſhed moderation.

After near twelve months had elapſed, and expectation was tired out, gradual notices of its appearance tranſpired. Firſt it was whiſpered that the Doctor, after ſubmitting his performance to the correction of a friend, had very near wrote the whole anew: then, it would come out ſpeedily: and after tracing it to one of its intended publiſhers, and two or three times being named, at length with due ſolemnity the bulky Review iſſued forth.

It muſt be owned, that to the writer himſelf, whatever might have been the opinion of others, the external appearance of the little Hiſtory, compared with the formidable ſize of your Review

view of it, excited the recollection of the overgrown Goliah, clad in heavy armour, ſtalking forth with menacing ſteps to demoliſh the little David. It remains then to be tried whether the ſtripling can find a few ſmooth ſtones in his pouch, as well as a ſling, wherewith to defend himſelf againſt this giant, who ſo proudly defies the armies of common ſenſe.

It is a fortunate circumſtance to write, with the prejudices of mankind ſtrongly intereſted in our favour. This, Sir, is doubly your fortune: firſt, with regard to the ſubject you have choſen; ſecondly, with reſpect to your own eſtabliſhed reputation. With theſe advantages, ſecure of welcome reception, well may the poſſeſſor advance with confidence: arguments, from his pen, are credited with double force; ſpecious ones are accepted as genuine; aſſertion ſtands for proof; declamation is miſtaken for reaſoning; ſmall errors are overlooked, and the moſt conſiderable ones excuſed. Belief is counted to him for righteouſneſs; and, like charity, is permitted to cover a multitude of ſins.

Far different is the ſituation of the man, who is ſo deficient in prudence, as to call accepted notions in queſtion! the attempt is conſidered as impious; and himſelf is hunted down like a wild

beaſt, under the name of Infidel! Thus it fared with the primitive Chriſtians; thus it fared with the firſt reformers; and even now, bating the faggot-ſtick, thus it fares with every one who preſumes to differ in opinion from his neighbours, in thoſe points from which they ſay, thou ſhalt not differ! The arguments urged by ſuch an one, are ſtiled wilful perverſions; his proofs are manifeſtations of his ignorance; his miſtakes are magnified beyond meaſure; and he is altogether, in meer chriſtian charity, held out to public deteſtation, as a monſter in human form! An old lanthorn is thus tied to a poor cur's tail, and he is turned out with hiſſing and clapping of hands; *bow! wow! wow!* cry all the yelping pack, and it is by meer good luck alone, if he eſcapes with whole bones!

Had not this author met with treatment very unexpected in your animadverſions on him, he would not again have ſet pen to paper on this ſubject. But a man muſt be a greater wretch than you have repreſented *him* to be, who, inſenſible to the opprobium caſt on him, can let you triumph with ſo high a hand, though with ſo queſtionable a pretenſion to victory.

The Hiſtory of the Man after God's own Heart, was evidently a juvenile production; the language

language of it would elſe have been more guarded, and not have lain open to ſo many extraordinary ſtrictures, ſome of which ſhall be noticed anon: but now, Sir, that the writer of it is ſo fortunate as to poſſeſs the unlooked-for advantage of a thorough examen of it from your learned hand; by which means every one will allow that he has gained the knowledge of the utmoſt extent of what criticiſm can object to it, from the fair and candid, even to that of Zoilus himſelf; if ever therefore another edition of it appears, it ſhall certainly profit ſomething from the acute notes you have beſtowed upon it. And yet, methinks, the ſanguine warmth of a young writer, who thought he perceived ſo clear a field before him, might have claimed ſome good-natured toleration from one who, though a diſtinguiſhed veteran, either is or ought to be conſcious, that he has not outwrote the ſame fault himſelf.

Let us once more caſt a look at the outſides of theſe adverſe books, before we open them. What a diſproportionate appearance! But if this writer hath put 'forced conſtructions on particular paſ-'ſages; invidious inſinuations, where there is 'nothing in the hiſtory to ſupport them; impro-'bable ſuggeſtions to eke out facts, or ſupply the

'place of them; falſe aſſertions, contrary to the 'truth of hiſtory, to furniſh matter for calumny 'and reviling; in a word, all methods contrary 'to truth and honour, and inconſiſtent with the 'rules of humanity, candor and juſtice!' A heavy charge indeed! but if it is really the caſe, impoſition ſo groſs might ſurely have been exploded, to the utter confuſion of this villifier, in far leſs compaſs! But as if one inſtance more were wanting to confirm what was ſaid in the preface to the Life of David, viz. 'that the 'ſenſe in which the acts of David are there un-'derſtood is the moſt obvious and natural, ap-'pears from the amazing pains it has occaſioned 'his champions to force another upon them;' *Ecce ſignum!* Here is the little hiſtory, of the ſize of a ſnuff-box, price eighteen-pence; and, after near a year's time ſpent in an endeavour to invalidate it, here is a bulky octavo wrote againſt it, price four ſhillings! Go on, Doctor, and proſper; though indeed many people ſhake their heads at the price, while many more have declared, that they would not accept four ſhillings to be obliged to read it. But the firſt of theſe do not conſider, that the hiſtorian, being a vulgar illiterate fellow, who has given them nothing but plain Engliſh, might well afford his paltry work

work for eighteen-pence; but that the Review of him, which is enriched with ſo many Greek and Hebrew quotations, could not in conſcience be charged leſs than four ſhillings: no, not a farthing leſs. The others do not reflect how much trouble it demands, and how much it will ſwell a work, to compare the various readings of ſcripture together; ſo that they may think it an extraordinary ſpecimen of brevity, to ſee it contained within ſuch moderate ſize.

The writer could not help ſmiling when he ſtated the caſe, that ſuppoſing his rejoinder were to exceed the quantity of your Review, only in arithmetical progreſſion, as much as your Review exceeds that of the hiſtory itſelf, what a ſize it would ſwell to! as large as Cruden's Concordance at leaſt. But the misfortune would have been, that it muſt then have been publiſhed by ſubſcription: and to whom could he apply, after the terrible picture you have drawn of him? He thinks he might have flattered himſelf, nevertheleſs, with the hopes of your name.

This however muſt really have been the caſe, had he adopted *your* plan of reviewing: had he, with unbating malignity, tortured every ſentence you have penned; and torn your very words to rags. This was a neceſſity to which he did not

imagine himſelf reduced; at the ſame time that he found no propenſity to avail himſelf of reſources which muſt be conſidered as rather illiberal. And though, God forgive him, he is conſcious of too many imperfections to warrant boaſting, he yet is too candid to return the compliment of imputing a black diaboliſm of heart to you, meerly from a difference in opinion. With how ill a grace this comes from a preacher of the goſpel of the meek and lowly Jeſus, he leaves you to reflect on at leiſure. But however flagrant and inconſiſtent it may be, he notwithſtanding frees you from the charge of ſingularity: for! too true it is, that the fault is far from being particular. In all religious conteſts, the bitterneſs of reſentment is ever on the orthodox ſide of the queſtion! Gracious God confirm to us a conſtitution of government, which confines this bitterneſs within the bounds of expreſſion only!

If ſome method be uſed in the debate concerning the moral character of David, the diſcuſſion of a few leading points will in great meaſure determine the merits of all the reſt; therefore you muſt not expect to be analyſed page after page, which would only lead to protraction and confuſion. If the writer of the Life of David can juſtify himſelf from the principal objections brought

brought againſt him, all the invidious declamatory deductions which give vent to your own reſentment, and are calculated to inflame that of others, as well as to ſwell the four ſhilling book; will by the candid be rated at juſt their real worth: and be found to be *vox & preterea nihil!*

It may juſt be previouſly aſked, reſpecting your charging the author with copying all his cenſures of David from Bayle and Morgan, becauſe you poſſibly read much the ſame obſervations in thoſe writers which you find in him; what in the name of Novelty you require? Did you expect a different ſeries of facts recorded by each? The ſame courſe of events muſt always be perceivable in records of the ſame period, unleſs new ones are coined. In your own words you may be aſked 'what novelty can there be in any true 'hiſtory?' Facts are indelible, and conſtructions on them, by people whoſe judgment is not warped by any previous byas, will not remarkably differ. This then may help you to account for the conformity you obſerve among theſe writers: and is explained to you, Sir, who, it is to preſumed from this cenſure, ſcorn to be beholden to any author who hath written on a ſubject before yourſelf.

Moreover,

Moreover, to be even with this writer, whom you archly ſuppoſe * to have been preſent at the covenant between David and his friend Jonathan, you have in turn taken upon you to be preſent at the writing his hiſtory, and can point out † what he copied from Bayle, and what from Morgan! Here however he begs leave to enter his caveat againſt you: ſince, though he does not expect to be credited by a man whoſe zeal hath eaten him up, he hopes the moderate part of mankind will believe his ſolemn declaration, that he knows no more of Morgan than the name, and that he is ſaid to be the writer of a work called the Moral Philoſopher: which work however, or any other works of his, he never read; nor knowingly, any quotations from: farther, that he entertained a diſlike to the conduct of king David before he had an opportunity of ſeeing Bayle; whoſe criticiſms, if the expreſſion may be allowed, he in great meaſure anticipated. This therefore, to him at leaſt, is a pregnant ſpecimen on what degree of evidence you will hazard an aſſertion!

The

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* Review, pag. 111.

† Ditto, preface, pag. 36. 37.

The author's deficiency in a knowledge of the oriental languages, is a continual occaſion of triumph to you; ſince there are not many pages of your Review in which you do not reproach him with it, with viſible exultation; and from this circumſtance, deny him every other qualification whatever, excepting ſuch as ſerve to render him odious; and theſe, Sir, to do you juſtice, you beſtow on him with a liberal hand, if not from a *liberal mind.* Suppoſe, however, this point were a little examined into, and inquiry were made how far you can really avail yourſelf of the writer's ignorance in this reſpect? and yet, it is rather cruel to attempt it, you convert the imputation to ſo many convenient purpoſes.

The writer, Sir, it ſeems, doth not underſtand Hebrew. Be it ſo. Let us obſerve of what this is productive. Firſt, your own importance is amply gratified by looking down, like one of the Giants in Guildhall, upon him on that account: but unluckily to maintain this altitude you are, in the ſecond place, betrayed into the neceſſity of invalidating the authority of the Engliſh verſion of the Scriptures, which has coſt the blood of ſo many martyrs to purchaſe, and which we proteſtants have for ſo many years congratulated ourſelves on the poſſeſſion of! Indeed, you are not

not very reſerved in this point; for though Mr. Bayle is under the ſame ban with the writer, you ſneeringly claſs Bayle with the Engliſh Bible: * and again, 'ſuch a one, (as 'the hiſtorian, ig-'norant of the language in which they are writ-'ten,') when he goes beyond his tranſlation, *or* '*keeps to it*, muſt neceſſarily blunder, and ex-'poſe himſelf to ridicule.' † This is alarming news! why neighbours! we are all impoſed on! and unleſs we underſtand Hebrew and Greek, the ſcriptures, ſo far from making us wiſe unto ſalvation, will only lead us into error, and expoſe us to ridicule! Better, far better would it be for us to have them ſealed up in the original languages, than to be deluded with a tranſlation ſo baleful in its properties! To us Engliſh readers, the advice of the Evangeliſt carries all the force of a taunt or ſneer; *Search the Scriptures, for in them* YE THINK *ye have eternal Life* ‡: yes, yes, we think ſo, but it ſeems, if we truſt to them, we muſt neceſſarily blunder and expoſe ourſelves to ridicule!

It happens however rather unfortunately, Sir, that the reſpectable contemplators of Hebrew tenter-

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* Preface, p. 34. † Ditto, p. 38.
‡ John v. 39.

tenter-hooks, are as much at a loſs about the preciſe meaning of *them*, as we little pigmies are about the conſiſtency of our deſpiſed Engliſh tranſlation! Pray, Doctor, are you a Hutchinſonian, or are you not? Are they not continually wrangling even about the uſe and meaning of *points?* Surely theſe learned Doctors ought, in juſtification of their own importance, firſt to agree among themſelves concerning the original, before they knit their awful brows, and cry, *Stand by thyſelf, come not near to us, for we are more learned than thou!* Original! what Original! It would be worth the knowledge, Doctor, to learn from which, among that great number of Hebrew Originals, whoſe conſiderable variations the learned, among whom you, Sir, are to be numbered, have ſo plentifully enabled Dr. Kennicot to collate, you draw your authorities? and the reaſons for prefering your own readings?

Until ſome ſatisfaction be offered reſpecting theſe points, until ſome agreement appears between the Hutchinſonians and other Hebrew expoſitors, it is hoped ſome degree of credit will be granted to that tranſlation, on which we are allowed to form our religious principles, though not to criticiſe from.

You

You ſay, Sir, * 'A candid critic will make 'ſome allowances both for defects and redun-'dances in books of that great antiquity, which 'the Old Teſtament Books confeſſedly are.' True, Sir! if the Old Teſtament Books, like other books, are left to reſt upon the allowances of candid criticiſm: if they are not obtruded upon us with any claim or authority to influence our eſtimation of them, ſuperior to thoſe of other writings; but you, Sir, ſet them above ſuch allowances, affirming † that you conſider David, 'as revelation repreſents him.' What! do we need revelation to record matters of fact; Pray are all the variations of the Hebrew copies revelation? When this plea is waved, we will then do the beſt we can with theſe antient writings. As it is, we have only to examine into the congruity of them.

The Hiſtorian had advanced in his preface ‡, 'that leſt it ſhould be imagined too great liberties 'are taken with the biblical writers, it may not 'be amiſs to mention once for all, that innume-'rable inſtances might be produced, to ſhew that 'the authority of the Lord, ſo continually quoted 'to

* Page 234. † Preface, p. 8. ‡ Page 12.

'to ſanctify every tranſaction related, conſtituted 'for the moſt part nothing more than national 'phraſes, which obtained univerſally * among ſo 'bigotted a people as on all occaſions the Jews 'appear to have been.'

The only portion of your obſervations on this paſſage, which it will anſwer any purpoſe to attend to, is comprehended in the enſuing extract †.

'Now, if our hiſtorian, or ſomebody elſe for 'him, can, as he boaſts, produce innumerable 'inſtances to ſhew that the authority of the Lord 'conſtituted for the moſt part, nothing more 'than national phraſes, it becomes him to do 'it in his own vindication; for unleſs he can 'fairly ſupport this aſſertion, great part of his 'hiſtory will appear to be falſhood and fiction, 'and his criticiſm nothing but the effect of igno-'rance and infidelity.'

He

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* Their prieſts, judges, and prophets, ruled them in the name of the Lord; and the people ſo taught, acquired a like ſtyle of diſcourſe. During the civil wars, in the reign of Charles I. and the uſurped protectorate of Oliver Cromwel, a phraſeology, in ſome degree ſimilar, obtained in England: how far juſtifyable, muſt be left to the learned.

† Preface, p. 32.

He ſubſcribes to the alternative.

Before theſe proofs are hinted at, it may not be amiſs to conſider another paſſage, *en paſſant*, that we may make clear way as we proceed.

You ſtrangely aſſert, Sir, that * 'It is to no 'purpoſe to allege, that what was pretended to 'be ſpoken—in the name of the Lord, was un-'worthy him to deliver, and therefore could not 'be ſpoken or delivered in command by him. 'This is foreign to the argument. The ſole 'queſtion is about the meaning of the expreſſions, 'in which the authority of the Lord is quoted; 'whether they ſignify any thing or nothing; 'or whether they who uſed them, and heard 'them, did conſider them as declarative of the 'divine authority or not.'

Theſe poſitions are very ſtrange indeed, conſidering the character of the perſon who advances them! You demand the ſolution of a queſtion, having previouſly barred the only means of inveſtigation! What is the alternative here? a Romiſh principle it is to be feared! We are to believe whatever is propoſed to our belief! for it is to no purpoſe to examine into the worth of it!

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* Preface, p. 33.

The conditions of *your* queſtion reduce the reply to a meer affirmation or negation; poſſibly not without deſign: but if we are to found our belief on the rational evidence of any point offered to our aſſent, it is certainly our buſineſs to examine into *poſſibility*, *propriety*, and *fitneſs*. Unleſs, therefore, you had laid down a rule for aſſenting and diſſenting without reflection, the intended method of arguing muſt be purſued.

If Britain be really that free country we are continually flattering ourſelves that it is, and which for the honour of the reformed religion it may be hoped to be, no perſon will run any hazard in expreſſing his opinion of any doctrinal point; more eſpecially when he at the ſame time exhibits the authorities on which he founds his judgment: if they are valid, his tenets however heterodoxical they may be deemed, are nevertheleſs juſt: if not, the advancer will meet that diſregard, which is all the puniſhment he ought to incur.

As there does not appear to be the *leaſt reaſon* to honour any man more than he *intrinſically* merits; and as examining the life of David is examining a *piece of hiſtory*; it is but exerciſing a liberty which no juſt reaſon can controul, from

any regard to relative circumſtances, or points of doctrine: it is therefore hoped that the real life of David, being as to the main points what is here repreſented, may plead this writer's excuſe for the freedom with which he has expreſſed his opinion of it: ſtill profeſſing, that wherever this appears to have been indulged with too much confidence, ſhall be reſtrained as future occaſions may allow opportunity.

Now, Sir, though the writer is no great friend to ſubſcriptions to articles of faith, yet he thinks it neceſſary in this place to preſent you with what perhaps you may conſider as a curioſity; to wit, a piece of his creed! and which he humbly preſumes to be a piece of yours alſo: as a touchſtone to try whatever is affirmed concerning the Almighty! But at the ſame time, fearful of expreſſing it in his own words, from the experience of your dexterity in word-catching, he will endeavour to find ſome paſſages in ſcripture ſuitable to his notions of the eternal perfections of the Supreme God! ſtill however apprehenſive, leſt by the help of the Hebrew, Chaldaic, Arabic, and Samaritan verſions, with the aſſiſtance of the Greek Septuagint, you may explain away and confound every paſſage produced from the Engliſh tranſlation. This being

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in your power to attempt or not, as inclination prompts, he muſt truſt to.

You have paſſed a cenſure on thoſe who quote paſſages from authors by halves *, with a view to perverſion; this is very wrong, by whoſoever practiſed, but will be avoided here, as compleat ſentences only will be extracted, and when placed together, their agreement or diſagreement will be obvious. One word more, however, on this head; it is not ſo unfrequent to find religious writers take three words from one part of the Bible, two from another, four from another, and thus ſplice ſentences together, which will prove a point of doctrine as clear as the ſun at noon day!

With reverence, would the author produce and ſubſcribe his aſſent to the enſuing propoſitions! which are numbered for future reference.

PROP. I.

The Heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament ſheweth his handy work. Pſalm xix. 1.

* Preface, p. 27.

PROP. II.

The works of his hands are verity and judgment: and his commandments are ſure. They ſtand faſt for ever and ever: and are done in truth and uprightneſs. Pſalm CXI. 7. 8.

PROP. III.

The Lord is good to ALL: *and his tender mercies are over* ALL *his works.* Pſalm CXLV. 9.

PROP. IV.

Of a truth—— God is no reſpecter of perſons; but IN EVERY NATION, *he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.* Acts X. 34, 35.

This, Sir, is Scripture, and reaſon alſo! and gives us in few words the moſt exalted notions of the Great God of the Univerſe! It is impoſſible, therefore, to withſtand the force with which they dart irreſiſtible conviction into a rational mind.

From theſe propoſitions another is deducible, equally valid and inconteſtible.

PROP.

PROP. V.

All affirmations which repreſent Deity as actuated by the paſſions, or ſubject to the weakneſſes of humanity, are totally inconſiſtent with the foregoing poſitions; are derogatory from his perfections; and evidently point out man as their author.

What an extenſive view does this open for ſpeculation! Suffice it, however, to confine our attention to the preſent object of debate.

That the Lord ſhould be offended at the Jews complaining of oppreſſive government and corrupt adminiſtration; that he ſhould interpret a deſire to change the adminiſtrators, into a renunciation of his Divine Providence; that he ſhould give them a king in his *anger*, and *afterward*, *finding* he did not prove obedient, ſhould *repent* of it; then take him away in his *wrath*; that he ſhould, however, at length *reconcile* himſelf to the meaſure; then chuſe them a king after his own heart, and eſtabliſh the kingdom in his houſe: if theſe points ſhould appear difficult to reconcile with the foregoing ſcriptural propoſitions: in that caſe,

Theſe repreſentations of Samuel are rather to be eſteemed as dictated only by his chagrin: and

though at the ſame time he preſerved a great ſhew of regard for the welfare of the people, this is quite conſonant with that external placidity and moderation with which perſons in public ſtations, deſirous to retain their power, often find it expedient to cloath their inward ſentiments. The writer indeed incurs your cenſure, by ſaying, he promiſed 'them a king with vengeance to them:' but pray, Doctor, how do you interpret his diſplay of kingly government? he certainly intended to frighten them out of their ſcheme; but the people who, when they pleaſed, knew how to be obſtinate, were not ſo eaſily talked out of their project: and though their naturally enthuſiaſtic diſpoſitions ſometimes cauſed ſtrange tranſitions in their conduct, they did not at this time enter into the propriety of the Lord's intereſting himſelf in the behalf of two corrupt magiſtrates.

You were guilty of a ſmall miſtake * yourſelf, in aſſerting that the incurſion of Nahaſh occaſioned the firſt demand of a king; Saul being already elected at that time, and the very commander who delivered his people from the ignominious

* Page 8.

minious terms inſiſted on by the Ammonite king.

You, Sir, deliver it as your opinion *, that 'in reality the demand of the people was inſo-'lent and treaſonable; as it was throwing off 'the immediate government of God, and as it 'expreſſed a deſire of being like other nations; 'which of all things in the world they ſhould 'have avoided †, and which was the cauſe of their 'final ruin.' What! was it inſolent to complain of oppreſſion? was it treaſonable in the people to chuſe their form of government? All government ought to ſpring from the choice of the people; and when the circumſtances of times demand and allow it, it is undoubtedly right to claim it; even though they ſhould miſtake the means to obtain their end. As to their rejection of the ſuperintendance of God over their affairs, it does not appear in this inſtance; and as to the cauſe of their ruin, what you ſo boldly aſſign for it, ſeems rather premature.

Some curious criticiſms of yours in this place, are deemed undeſerving notice; but thoſe who are deſirous of ſeeing a ſpecimen of your talents

* Page 10. † And yet Providence had an *end* in the appointment of David *to be king*, viz. 'that God 'by him might accompliſh the antient promiſes made 'to Abraham, in their full extent.' pag. 88.!

that way, may be amply gratified in their deſire, and meet with no ſmall amuſement into the bargain, in pages 11 and 12 of your Review. There, Doctor, they may find you very buſy in ſmall craft, which no gentleman could be thought capable of deſcending to, and for which no plea can be offered but the ſad one of your needing every little artifice to ſupport your oppoſition; and a confidence that they might paſs with the unthinking majority as mighty clever and dextrous.——'Ah! Doctor, there you 'have him charmingly! Oh! what a fine thing 'it is to be high learned!'

But to leave cavilling at words, and attend to things; you allege, from Joſephus, that 'the ſo-'licitude of Saul and his ſervant, to make a 'preſent to Samuel, proceeded from their igno-'rance.' * But, Sir, this is a very weak ſuppoſition: for ignorance could not have dictated ſuch a meaſure without precedent. It is therefore a fair concluſion that private intelligence not only uſed † to be given, but be paid for ‡. You ſay ‖——'But doth not the whole tenor of Sa-'muel's

* Page 36. † 1 Sam. ix. 9. ‡ Ibid. ver. 7.
‖ Page 15.

'muel's conduct manifeſt, as our author affirms, 'that he intended to give them a king in name, 'but to have one ſubordinate to his own will? 'I think not; becauſe his allowing the people a 'free, impartial, and open election by lot, is 'one demonſtration that he intended they ſhould 'have a king to their own mind, and who ſhould 'be ſubordinate to none, but that God, who 'was the ſupreme king of the nation, and by 'whoſe will the king they choſe ought to be de-'termined.'

If their king was to be ſubordinate to God, and to be determined by his will, it would be curious to know how this people had rejected God, by demanding a king! Again, if it was a free election by lot, it might be a *method* according to their own mind, of chuſing a king; but certainly could not ſecure the fixing on a *king* to their own mind! as you, Sir, affirm. Once more; with regard to the freedom and impartiality of the election; you do not deny, Sir, that the king hereafter to be choſen, was previouſly pointed out, and allotted to this exaltation: now without entering at this time into a diſpute whether the choice was made by God or man, yet the previous election being a fact, the popular election was intentionally managed to confirm the

the other: and whether over-ruled by God or by Samuel, how could it in either caſe be really a free and impartial election? The author, therefore, begs you would graciouſly be pleaſed to give him back the word *apparently* again; as he has ſtill ſome uſe for it; however inaccurately it might be placed before. The means by which the lot was guided to Saul, are referred back to you to determine.

Though Saul was a king given to the Jews in anger, yet, as you obſerve, he was intended to be obedient to the commands of the Lord, as delivered to him by Samuel; but it ſeems he was not obedient! but gave 'a ſtrong ſpecimen 'of that obſtinate, raſh, and impetuous temper, 'that made him unfit for the government he was 'raiſed to, and which was the true reaſon of his 'being rejected by God.' * But was it not, however, a ſtronger reaſon againſt his being choſen by infinite wiſdom? Will you, Sir, venture to ſay that the Lord was miſtaken? indeed, ſcripture † intimates ſomething like it; but is it not more

* Review, pag. 26. It is to be noted, however, that in the affair of the ſacrifice, he tarried *according to the ſet time that Samuel had appointed.* 1 Sam. xiii. 8.

† 1 Sam. xv. 10. 11.

more conſiſtent with the IId and IVth ſcriptural propoſition *, to attribute the anger, the choice, the diſappointment, the repentance and rejection, to Samuel, agreeable to prop. V. ? †

It is not incumbent on the author to account entirely for the motives of Samuel's choice of Saul in the circumſtances wherein he found him; though were it material, very probable ſuggeſtions might be offered on this head.

Joy to you, Doctor, on your conceit ‡ of the aſs-ſhepherd! It is true he is quite a new created animal, yet—here the author was almoſt tempted to retort a joke on you, but no good end reſults from them, and other work is at hand.

You would not allow the writer, Sir, to ſay that the authority of the Lord was cuſtomarily quoted among the Jews; and yet yourſelf do not ſeem to have attained a preciſe meaning of one of theſe phraſes; for when the ſpirit of the Lord is ſaid to have come upon Saul ‖ you expound it to be a temporary prophetic inſpiration; yet when the ſpirit of the Lord is ſaid to depart from him, behold it has a different meaning quite!

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* Page 20. † Page 21. ‡ Review, p. 30.
‖ Page 54. 55.

quite! * you then aſk 'what ſpirit? not the 'prophetic ſpirit, which he received according 'to Samuel's prediction; which ceaſed inſtantly 'when his prophecying was ended: not the ſpi-'rit to render him incapable of tranſgreſſing; for 'that he never had, and therefore could never 'loſe it. No. *The ſpirit of the Lord departed 'from him*, i. e. God was no longer with him to 'proſper and guide him †; but left him, as the 'effect of his diſobedience, to that evil, melan-'choly, jealous, envious, malicious, murderous 'ſpirit, that afterward poſſeſſed him, and ſeems 'never wholly to have left him.' So convenient is it to maintain a latitude of interpretation to ſerve an argument at a pinch. A latitude, Sir, that you exerciſe very freely in the courſe of this laboured work. But the author's obſervation reſpecting Saul, remains ſtill in full force: for, when Saul left Samuel after his private inauguration, and the ſcripture relates what befel him, the narrative commences thus. *And it was ſo, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel,*

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* Page 55.

† Yet your immediately preceding words affirm him never to have had that ſpirit of guidance!

Samuel, God gave him another heart: * in conſequence of the promiſe that he ſhould *be turned into another man* †. A perſon would conclude from the premiſes, that this new heart given him by the Lord would have been a good one, and an extraordinary good one; and yet Saul tranſgreſſed in the eſtimation of Samuel nevertheleſs! the prophetic inſpiration was moreover, and is ſeparately mentioned; both in the promiſe and in the relation of its completion. And yet again, if the ſpirit of the Lord is interpreted by prophecy; when David was anointed, the ſpirit of the Lord is ſaid to have come upon David *from that day forward:* ‡ and the ſpirit of the Lord to depart from Saul ‖. But his prophetic powers *did not* depart from him! ſince he is reported to have prophecied twice afterward: § and at the laſt time, Sir, you give it as your opinion ¶, that what he propheſied 'was, ſome-'what certainly worthy of the ſpirit of God, 'which came upon him.' All this compared together, appears as odd to the full, as the hiſtorian's obſervation!

Poor

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* 1 Sam. x. 9. † Ibid. ver. 6. ‡ 1 Sam. xvi. 13.
‖ Ibid. ver. 14. § 1 Sam. xviii. 10. Ditto, xix. 24.
¶ Page 66.

Poor Saul! what an infernal being art thou repreſented! thou art even reviled worſe than Shimei reviled the inſtrument of thy misfortunes! But it was thy fate to offend thoſe who never forgive; hence came thy diſtreſſes when alive, and thy magnified crimes when dead!

It is true, Sir, that the hiſtorian has ventured to hint at motives for ſome of Saul's actions, which are attributed to inconſiſtency; but he is always conſidered as *a Hebrew:* and when you cite the expreſſion, that his character doth not appear to be ſtained with any conſpicuous fault; and ring your changes upon it; you were not generous enough to prefix what is connected with it, viz. 'allowing for the *peculiar complexion* of 'the people over whom he was placed'——this includes a meaning not altogether for your purpoſe: but who quotes writers by halves now, Doctor? *

'The exciſion of the Amalekites,' you ſay †, 'had been determined, and ordered by God, 'above 400 years before the time we are now 'ſpeaking of, upon their ungenerouſly, and with-'out

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* See Review, preface, p. 27. † Pag. 56. 153.

'out any cauſe, attacking the Hebrews at Re-'phidim.' It was extreamly natural for theſe nations to oppoſe the paſſage of an emigrant people marching with profeſſed intentions to diſpoſſeſs them of their habitations, property, and lives. Their continual enmity to the Jews *, is deducible from the ſame ſource.

But you plead the wickedneſs of theſe nations as an argument for their deſtruction; pray were not the Hebrews continually reproached with their wickedneſs and rebellion? and any other plea for peculiar privileges, than that of peculiar excellence, will not agree with prop. IV. This, however, is rather a deviation; let us return.

Saul's crime included not only his preſerving king Agag, but alſo the beſt of the cattle! Pray, Sir, do tell us for what crimes the cattle were proſcribed? Saul, in this reſervation, acted but according to the uſual practice in the Jewiſh wars, which was to ſave all that was good, and appropriate it to their own emolument.

Having, however, ſtated the caſe, that the writer aimed to eſtabliſh the character of Saul, as that of the hero of his piece; it was eaſy to play off all

* Page 181.

all your ſmall artillery againſt the ſcheme: it is pretty amuſement; therefore, while you are thus diverting yourſelf, other points may be conſidered.

It is a moſt extraordinary prohibition that you will not allow *God's own Heart* to be the heighth of purity by ſuppoſition! you aſk * 'by whoſe 'ſuppoſition?' and anſwer, 'by no man's liv-'ing, but one who is bleſſed with our author's 'ignorance and preſumption.' This bleſſing, Sir, is all your own. It is, however, an ignorant preſumption, of which he will never have cauſe to be aſhamed, either here or hereafter. But he has the preſumption, Sir, to tell you, that if you are able to conſtrue your mother tongue, you are guilty of wilful pervertion in *your* expoſition of this ſuppoſition; as well as in another inſtance, where you charge the author with ſaying, that the inteſtine commotions in Judea, occaſioned by the revolts of Abſalom and Sheba, continued three years †: neither of which feats will reflect much honour on you.

It is not worth while to analyſe them, they are referred to, and that ſchool boy ought to be flogged,

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* Preface, p. 8. † Ditto, p. 26. Review, p. 217.

flogged who, having read the paſſages in queſtion, could not detect your expoſition of them. The phraſe——Man after God's own heart, was never underſtood by the writer as attributing poſitive perfection to David; but as expreſſive of a high relative encomium on his character.

Your limitation of this expreſſion to a religious ſenſe, independent of a moral reference, is a reſtriction not allowable: ſince piety toward God is inconſiſtent with turpitude of manners. You have indeed cited ſeveral paſſages to evince that this phraſe implied a readineſs to fulfil the commands of the Lord; and what then? is an obedience to the occaſional commands of God, conſiſtent with a diſregard of his permanent moral injunctions? You have indeed ſaid* 'The particular purpoſes for which God raiſed 'him (David) to the throne, were that by his 'ſteady adherence to the one true God, and the 'religion that was eſtabliſhed by Moſes, he 'might be an illuſtrious example to all his poſte-'rity, that ſhould reign after him;'——and you have alſo added †, 'If therefore David's moral character WAS WORSE *than it will ever be proved*

D *to*

* Page 88. † Page 89. 103.

'*to be*, he might be *a man after God's own heart*, 'in the proper original ſenſe of the expreſſion; 'and our author's treatiſe is an impertinent at-'tempt, to prove David not to be, what the Sa-'cred Hiſtory never aſſerted him to be.' How much more impertinent then is your treatiſe, in which you labour to make him to be, what you own 'the Sacred Hiſtory never aſſerted him to 'be!'

You may, perhaps, be ſincere in your opinion, but many of your readers will hardly think a pious character veſted with ſuch great latitudes of moral exceptions. But it was a neceſſary point to eſtabliſh, it being all the foundation you had, on which to erect your building: but credit a friend, Doctor, who aſſures you it is a ſandy one.

As our moral obligations ariſe from our ſocial connexions, and our welfare depends on the conſervation of them, it is poſſible for a perſon to be virtuous who may yet have no religion; but a perſon *cannot* be religious to the excluſion of morality. David, therefore, to be a man after God's own heart, ought to have been of exemplary morals.

Not to mention that, if infinite wiſdom makes a choice, and the choſen perſon acts by expreſs warrant

warrant from God, ſomething more than common knowledge and virtue is naturally expected; to evidence the fact.

In your account of David's introduction to the court of Saul *, you affect to laugh at the hint of a concerted plan for producing him. Concerning this, it need only be ſaid, that like Saul, his deſtination to the kingdom was previous to the public ſteps taken for his advancement to it; and where hiſtory fails, conjecture ſteps in, and ought to be, as it is in this inſtance, on the ſide of probability.

You have alſo produced ſome Hebrew † words to prove that you do not know what is meant by David's being made armour-bearer to Saul! but as it appears to be a military appointment, diſtinct from his muſical capacity, the wonder ſtill remains concerning his diſmiſſion ‡: and more eſpecially ſince Saul was not thoroughly cured of

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* Page 89. † Page 95. note.

‡ You ſuppoſe, p. 96, that his abſence from Saul muſt have been for a conſiderable time, perhaps a year or two. But by the marginal chronology to the Bible, it appears that the time from the firſt anointing of

the hyp. This leads to a ſtill farther wonder at Saul's ignorance of David, when he encountered the Philiſtine Giant; as, the interval of time between his diſmiſſion and the combat could not be conſiderable, ſince the day after the combat, David harped before the king * *as at other times.*

So far from commending Saul for the price he aſked for his daughter, after David appears to have won her †, it ſeems a demand very ridiculouſly expreſſed. It muſt have been a glorious ſight to have ſeen David bring the foreſkins to king Saul, ſtrung perhaps on a piece of packthread, and dangling in his hand; or thrown a-croſs his ſhoulders like a ſaſh! and if Miſs Michal was preſent, how her pretty little heart muſt exult when the required number being told off, as many more were gallantly preſented at her feet!

With regard to the affection between David and Jonathan, David's expreſſion of it is uncommonly

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of David, to Jonathan's expoſtulation with his father, on his antipathy to him, was included within the compaſs of a ſingle year!

* 1 Sam. xviii. 10. † 1 Sam. xvii. 25. 27.

commonly ſtrong * in his lamentation for him! But if, as you ſay †, 'Jonathan ever conſiders 'David as an innocent perſon, and pleads for 'him to his father, not as for a rebel, or noto-'rious offender, to obtain his pardon; but as 'having never done any thing to forfeit Saul's 'favour, or his own life;' yet beſide this affection, Jonathan, it is poſſible, really thought David appointed to the kingdom, by divine commiſſion, which Saul in his reaſonable hours does not ſeem to have done; and which no doubt was eſteemed one of the ſymptoms of his madneſs: and his uneaſy reflexions on all the circumſtances of the pretenſion conſidered together, very poſſibly diſordered him enough to countenance the imputation.

On the whole, he appears to have been ſtrangely irreſolute and inconſiſtent with himſelf; and is perhaps repreſented more ſo than he might really have been: but the undertaking to render himſelf independent was too arduous for one in his ſituation; therefore his actions and profeſſions might ſometimes diſagree. Indeed, after all, whether we attribute any thing to partial repre-

 ſentation

* 2 Sam. i. 26. † Page 107.

ſentation or not, the Scripture Hiſtory, in the form we now ſee it, is not well put together: we ſhall ſee how it will read when the expected collations are made. It is impoſſible to argue from every expreſſion that may be produced; we muſt form our judgment from leading events, and correſponding expreſſions; and determine as they tally with probability. If Saul himſelf, however he is repreſented as ſubſcribing to it, was really aſſured of David's deſtination to ſuperſede him by Divine decree, there was nothing left for him but reſignation: Can man fight againſt God? ſince therefore his continual aim was to deſtroy David, it argues againſt this aſſurance: and if Saul himſelf was mad, ſurely his ſoldiers were not; and how came he to find his army as mad as himſelf *, to perſecute the Lord's anointed?

It was thought that Saul's maſſacre of the prieſts at Nob, had been ſufficiently cenſured, when his reſentment was declared to have 'exceeded not only the bounds of humanity, but 'alſo of good policy.' But that this reſentment was cauſeleſs, does not follow from any thing

* You ſay David's claim was univerſally known, page 164.

thing you have urged *. It was indeed a barbarous action; but humanity muſt not be underſtood as an impediment in human politics: and were we to ſtart at every maſſacre that occurs in the Jewiſh hiſtory, the pen muſt be employed in little elſe than notes of exclamation!

You will not allow † that when David retired from Judea to Achiſh king of Gath, the firſt time; he intended to enter into a treaty of alliance with him againſt the Hebrews; than which nothing can be more evident. You aſk, 'had he any quarrel with them?' No! he had not, but he had with their king. Again, you aſk ‡, 'would not ſuch an alliance with the Phi-'liſtine prince againſt them, have been a ſure 'means of cutting off every expectation of ever 'coming at the Hebrew throne?' No! it *did not*, which is ſtill more. You may perhaps reply,

* In ſo ſmall a territory as Judea, the difference between the king and his ſon-in-law, ſo popular a man, could not be unknown to perſons in any meaſure removed from the vulgar. Therefore Abimelech and your interpretation of his defence, are not to be implicitly credited.

† Page 115. ‡ Page 116.

ply, that he did not enter into a treaty with him; eſpecially againſt the Hebrews. It is true, we have no treaty handed down to us, neither perhaps did they ſign and ſeal: but he afterward did enter into ſuch a connexion with this Philiſtine prince as his ſituation warranted, he aſked refuge with him, obtained it, and acknowledged the obligation by a preſent out of his plunder; he promiſed his aſſiſtance to him againſt the Hebrews, and yet came to be king of Judea nevertheleſs! So that you gain little by this queſtion.

In your remarks on David's collecting partiſans at Adullam, you produce ſome Hebrew and Greek *, to ſhew that you knew how *men in difficulties*, and *bitter of ſpirit*, were expreſſed in thoſe languages; which really is all the purpoſe your quotations appear to ſerve: and having affirmed theſe difficulties to be ſuch, 'that the 'moſt worthy men *may* be in;' we are left to infer the *ergo*, that theſe adherents to David were the moſt worthy of men. But without conteſting the private merit of theſe worthy men, it may juſt be hinted that *diſtreſs*, *debt*, and *diſcontent* againſt the government in being, are the moſt favourable

* Page 117.

favourable circumſtances to give birth to ſedition. Such were the ſituations of the men who reſorted to David, *and he became a captain over them.* You look upon David as only ſolicitous for his perſonal ſafety; but by what inducements did theſe men reſort to him? it ſhould ſeem that they had all diſquiets enough of their own, why ſhould they all quit their own concerns, and unite to protect him? If he was 'the well-known 'ſucceſſor * to the crown,' and Saul a mad tyrant, it would have been more in character had the powerful and reſpectable part of the people patronized this perſecuted youth againſt his impious oppreſſor; he would thus have appeared reſpectable himſelf. But without this ſanction, what could he do to render himſelf of conſequence? why he allured men deſperate in their circumſtances to embark in his projects: and aided the alleged purpoſe of Divine will, by an arm of fleſh.

You indeed, Sir, aſſert † that 'we read no-'thing of their plundering and murthering others:' an aſſertion which is rather premature! their 'good diſcipline and order' will not prove it; and

* Page 118. † Ibid.

and employment in 'ſervices of a friendly and 'benificent nature,' did not enable theſe diſtreſſed men to make preſents to king Achiſh!

Their pretenſions to the ſovereignty over Judea, being derivable from the ſame authority; you argue * that 'it was equal rebellion in Saul 'to oppoſe David, as in David to oppoſe Saul; 'and David had as good a right to diſpute the ti-'tle of Saul and his family, as Saul had to diſ-'pute his.' Poſſibly he might, Doctor, had they ſtarted fair. But the appointment of Saul had already taken place, and had received a popular confirmation: David diſturbed a quiet government, and therefore it muſt be by ſome new diſcovered rule in logic that he 'is at once excul-'pated from all rebellion againſt Saul:' and not—'by the doctrine of our biographer.'

You prove the innocence of David againſt the charge of intending to conteſt the kingdom; from the profeſſions of himſelf, of Jonathan, and of Saul; none of which will be admitted as valid evidence, for ſome reaſons before-mentioned. You own † at the ſame time, 'there 'were in thoſe days evil-minded perſons, as well 'as

* Page 121. † Page 123.

'as in ours, who inſinuated that David was a 'rebel, and had a deſign on Saul's life.' Evil-minded to be ſure they muſt be to inſinuate any ſuch thing; but unleſs they were arrant fools, as well as evil-minded, we muſt take it for granted their inſinuations were deduced from circumſtances which rendered them probable; many of which we may ſuppoſe not to have reached our times; ſo that the melancholy diſorder of Saul was not without external cauſes, to excite the evil ſpirit within him.

David reſcued Keilah from the Philiſtine invaders: this exploit, you think *, 'might have 'drawn one word of commendation from this 'very candid hiſtorian.' It ſhall have all the commendation to which it is entitled, from *your own* repreſentation of the action; and what can be fairer?

Diſſatisfied with the writer's ſaying that David hoped to make it a garriſon for himſelf, you add †, 'I believe David was in hopes to have 'dwelt in ſafety there, after the deliverance he 'had obtained for the citizens, as he had thereby 'purchaſed their friendſhip and protection. But 'he

* Page 126. † Page 127.

'he could not hope to make it a garriſon, be-
'cauſe he knew he had not men enough for
'that purpoſe, as appears from his conduct; be-
'cauſe when he had ſure information of the
'treachery they intended him, he abandoned the
'city, as not able to curb the inhabitants, and
'retired to the wilderneſs.'

This paſſage alone is amply ſufficient to confirm the reality of David's rebellious intentions: it is therefore worth analyſing. That he delivered this city from the depredations of the Philiſtines is granted: that he by this action thought to purchaſe the friendſhip of the inhabitants, you acknowledge: the uſe he intended to convert this friendſhip to, is the point to be aſcertained. Saul was advancing to ſuppreſs him. You, Sir, ſay, that he hoped to have dwelt in ſafety at Keilah: but that, not having men ſufficient to awe the inhabitants, their concurrence was neceſſary. Had he ſeduced them from their allegiance, and obtained the expected protection, he would have deprived Saul of this city; which city the author humbly imagined might have been conſidered as a garriſon. You will undoubtedly again urge the old plea of his providing only for his perſonal ſafety, againſt his malignant perſecutor. But, Sir, his intended retention of a city

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to ſecure that ſafety, was a flagrant rebellious intention. Had he gained this one city, as his ſtrength increaſed, he would have concluded as many more as he could have procured, neceſſary for his preſervation; until he had monopolized the whole country, agreeable to the grant of Samuel, which would then have juſtified the uſurpation. But baulked in the firſt ſtep by the loyalty, miſcalled treachery, of the Keilites, he evacuated the town, having loſt the recompenſe of his labour, and with his men *went whitherſoever they could go* *.

Not to inſiſt on the hint that the invaſion of the Philiſtines juſt after the raiſing the ſiege of Keilah was of David's procuring; the ſuppoſition is not of that marvellous nature in which you triumphantly repreſent it †. For though David had juſt done them an ill turn, yet his aim in it being diſappointed, and himſelf deſtitute of any place of ſecurity for a retreat; by what rule in politics will you deny, that David thus circumſtanced between two enemies, might negotiate a pacification to draw off one of them? and this ſuppoſition is far from being diſcredited, by conſidering

* 1 Sam. xxiii. 13. † Page 127.

ſidering that whenDavid found he could not maintain any footing in Judea, the next ſtep of importance taken by him, was to retire among thoſe very Philiſtines.

Firſt, however, happened the adventures at Engedi and Maon. On what account Saul entered the cave * is not worth much Hebrew: your expoſition may ſtand undiſturbed by the writer, if you think the diſcourſe between David and his men in ſo quiet a receſs, and the cutting off a piece of Saul's robe, (hardly performed with the neatneſs of a taylor's ſhears) might not diſturb a man with all his ſenſes awake. To invalidate the motive alleged by the writer for David's not killing Saul, founded on the unlikelihood of the Jews accepting for their king a man who ſhould embrue his hands in the blood of

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* It is impoſſible to paſs your judicious note on the word *uncover*, p. 128. without doing honour to your abilities! where you will not permit *uncover* to ſignify an act oppoſed to that of *cover!*—'becauſe 'uncovering my feet ſignifies pulling off my ſhoes 'and ſtockings; therefore, putting them on ſignifies 'going to bed.'—Pray, Doctor, put them on and go to bed; the ſooner the better.

of the Lord's anointed, you reply *, 'But ſurely 'if this be a good reaſon, it will hold as ſtrongly 'againſt his rebelling againſt Saul, and by force 'of arms diſputing the crown with him; for 'what reaſonable hopes could he entertain, that 'the Jews would receive for their king, a man 'who ſhould dare to riſe up in rebellion againſt 'the Lord's anointed, and with a company of 'banditti and ruffians, by diſputing the crown 'with him, endeavour to ſnatch it impiouſly 'from his head? Eſpecially as a rebellion againſt 'a prince is an actual attempt upon his life, and 'when ſucceſsful, generally iſſues in his deſtruc-'tion.' There is one conſideration which will obviate this plea, which is, that though ſucceſsful rebellion, which then changes its name, generally terminates in the deſtruction of the vanquiſhed; yet that deſtruction is greatly altered in appearance, when a prince falls in the common diſtreſſes of open warfare, and when by private aſſaſſination. This, Sir! you inſiſt on, in a notable manner, in the caſe of Uriah †.

There may be yet another motive hinted for his not killing Saul. You will not allow ‡ the ſuppoſition

* Page 131. † Page 210. ‡ Page 135.

ſuppoſition that Saul ſtrayed far from his men when he entered the cave: think then, Sir, what chance for eſcape David and his ſmall corps would have had, if Saul had been miſſing! if he had been obſerved to enter the cave without coming out again! and if upon ſearch he had been there found murdered!

David's mercy to Saul is therefore to be naturally accounted for, without contradicting the ſcriptures *, by aſſerting, 'that he was anointed 'not to ſuperſede him while living, but to ſuc-'ceed him after his death;' or plain facts either, by ſaying, that he was 'determined to wait that 'event, in the courſe of providence, and not to 'haſten it by any act of his own.' Let circumſtances decide this point.

The perſonal character of Nabal, conſidering the affair of his return to David's demands, as delivered down to us; is hardly more material, than the motive for which Saul retired into the cave: not to be an implicit admirer of this adventurer, is ſufficient even at this day to ſtamp infamy on a perſon's character. He had preſerved his poſſeſſions without *a wall* hitherto; and did not

* 1 Sam. xv. 26. 28. xvi. 1.

not conceive himſelf under ſuch obligations to David as he was repreſented to be: with the bluntneſs of a ruſtic he ſpoke his ſentiments without reſerve, which excited a reſentment ſuitable to the character Nabal viewed him in. Like Saul, Nabal muſt no doubt be a madman, to differ with David; but your inferring a brutality in his conduct more than appears, or is probable; arguing from the degree of David's reſentment *, is rather weak than acute.

It would be doing great ſervice to David's character, if you could prove any poſſible behaviour of Nabal, ſufficient to juſtify ſuch ſavage intention, eſpecially from a perſon peculiarly pious. But as you own † David's reſolution '*by* '*no means* to be vindicated,' why do you uſe any means for that purpoſe?

The fair Abigail averted the execrable deed! The acknowledged ‡ defects and redundancies in the Old Teſtament books, render it impoſſible for you, Sir, or any one elſe, to ſay abſolutely what did, or did not, paſs at this meeting. Thus much we know; that the lady was beautiful, the ſoldier young, and very ſuſceptible

* Page 139. † Page 141. ‡ Page 234.

of amorous impreſſions; that ſhe obtained her ſuit, but that her huſband, inſtead of rejoicing at his deliverance, and approving his wife's conduct, broke his heart on the occaſion; and to cloſe the ſtory, that David immediately took her to wife; and not only her, but another alſo. Continency was not his virtue.

Theſe circumſtances are thought to juſtify the reflexions they excited: and moreover, that if they had occurred in any other hiſtory, you, Sir, would have drawn concluſions not much different. Indeed, you muſt pardon the writer, who while he conſiders you as under the neceſſity of juſtifying many tranſactions, yet imagines you may ſometimes ſecretly wiſh they had been otherwiſe than they are.

The peculiar elegance, purity, and preciſe difference of accepting *faces*, inſtead of *perſons*; does not appear, for want of your having been more explicit. Though *faces* may be a more literal tranſlation of your Hebrew, yet *perſon* ſeems more intelligible and agreeable to the meaning of the preſent paſſage. Why you recommend theſe favourite *faces* to the writer's remembrance as long as he lives *, is another hint

* Pag. 144.

hint too learnedly obſcure for him to receive the benefit intended by it.

You produce next, Sir, what you call reaſons *, to diſprove the ſuppoſition that the two inſtances of David's ſparing the life of Saul, were but different relations of the ſame fact. Theſe reaſons might have paſſed for good ones, perhaps, and have been credited with furniſhing freſh hints of information, did they appear to be any more than a bare enumeration of the already known and acknowledged differences between the two relations; numbered and contraſted together. But ſince the caſe is no otherwiſe, ſince the writer ſhewed himſelf already apprized of them, and ſince you have not added to the ſtrength of them, it would have been as well if you had not congratulated yourſelf ſo much on the merit of tranſcription.

Theſe different circumſtances, however, though not altogether reconcileable, are not altogether ſo variable as you intend they ſhould appear. To inſtance the firſt in your contraſt: you oppoſe David's being in the wilderneſs of *Engedi* in one relation, to his being in the wilderneſs of

* Page 149.

Ziph in the other. While we remain ſatisfied with names, to be ſure Ziph and Engedi are not the ſame: nothing can be clearer. But it would be of advantage to your argument to give the diſtance of theſe two places; for in the maps and accounts * of Judea, Ziph, Hachilah, Maon, Carmel, and Engedi, appear to have been in the neighbourhood of each other. Now in England, where any foreſt or heath is common to ſeveral bordering towns, it will have ſeveral local names at each, reſpectively. It is therefore *more* than probable, that the wilderneſs between Ziph and Engedi, might at each place obtain each name; and be generally known by either. Though David, therefore, is repreſented at this period, as making ſeveral movements †, in the *ſtrong holds* in the wood, &c. they appear to have been within the compaſs of this wilderneſs of *Ziph*, or *Engedi*.

Your third *reaſon*, in the Engedi column, of Saul's being alone, and ſtrayed from his men, had been previouſly denied ‡ by you, and termed a 'ſilly

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* Particularly Wells Sacred Chronology, vol. III. p. 35. 36. ſecond edit. The maps of Judea, indeed, are very vague, though ſufficiently ſatisfactory as to this point.

† 1 Sam. xxiii. 14, &c. ‡ Page 135.

a ‘ ſilly ſuppoſition ;’ it therefore cannot now be very wiſe. The author does not pretend to harmonize any more of them : the identity of place ; the general ſimilitude of the actions ; differing only in relative circumſtances ; the ſmall interval of time that muſt have been between them, occupied only by the ſtory of Nabal ; the abrupt introduction of the ſecond relation, after this ſtory, without proper connexion ; and the total ſilence in it of all reference or alluſion to a recent adventure ſo ſtrikingly ſimilar ! ſtill ſeem to argue a ſtrange repetition !

You indeed undertake to account for the entire omiſſion of all reference to the former adventure in the latter *. But your imputing it to David's *politeneſs*, and to Saul's conſciouſneſs, is not ſupported by any thing ſtronger than your *apparent* † perſuaſion.

David's conduct, while protected by Achiſh king of Gath, is the next ſubject of your panegyric. You, Sir, who are as intent upon abuſing Saul, as either Bayle, Morgan, or this writer, or an aſſociation of all three could poſſibly contrive to beſtow on David ; take

* Page 147. † Only this once, Doctor ?

every occaſion to draw parallels between them, reſulting conſtantly in a new imputation on the memory of Saul! In this place you ſay *, that according to this writer, 'It was no crime in 'Saul to do what David did; and he ſhall paſs 'unreproved for the ſame action that ſhall mark 'out David as a free-booter and murtherer.' You are again to be told, Sir, that you are miſtaken (if it really is a miſtake) in ſuppoſing that the character of Saul was patroniſed in that little hiſtory. Not being the principal object of attention, he was no farther inſiſted on, than the connexion he had with the ſtory, required. With regard to the preſent queſtion, it is to be noted that Saul, in his expedition againſt the Amalekites, acted in obedience to that authority, to which in your opinion he was bound to have yielded. David, on the contrary, produces no commiſſion for his inroads on the Amalekites, Gezrites and Geſſurites, but appears actuated only with a deſire of plunder. You add †, indeed, that theſe three clans were not confederates with Achiſh, but in a ſtate of hoſtility with him. It is not ſuppoſed that there was any ſettled

* Page 152. † Page 153.

ſettled amity maintained among theſe different tribes, but how valid the proofs you have not produced may be, to prove the alleged hoſtility in queſtion, cannot be determined: what you have cited *, only alludes to the particular *retaliatory* incurſion on Ziklag, which *was* in the land of the Philiſtines. Had David conſidered them as ENEMIES to his patron king Achiſh, tell us, Doctor, why *David ſaved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to* GATH, *ſaying, leſt they ſhould tell of us, ſaying, ſo did David, and ſo will be his manner, all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philiſtines?*

Such, however, was the reaſon that David gave for his maſſacre of theſe poor wretches, which, contrary to Scripture and common ſenſe, you ſay was in reality doing king Achiſh ſervice †. But his excuſe neither agrees with this plea, nor with another, which you are kind enough to lend ‡ him: namely, 'that the Ama-'lekites were many ages before doomed to de-'ſtruction; and the Geſſurites and Gezrites,

* 1 Sam. xxx. 16. † Page 153.
‡ Page 153.

'who were old inhabitants * of the land, Ca-
'naanites, were commanded to be extirpated by
'God himſelf, for ſuch reaſons, as *renders* ſuch
'a command worthy his character.'

The true cauſe of the antipathy between theſe people and the Hebrews, has already been hinted †; but is the *verbal denunciation* of ſuch cruel dooms by the Creator, agreeable with Prop. III.? The Lord is able to fulfil his own decrees in the ordinary courſe of his providence, and they are thus leſs liable to be queſtioned, than when effected by *men*, evidently intereſted in ſuch extirpations.

But if we aſſume the ſuppoſition that David, contrary to his own expreſs words, had in view the fulfilment of this old ſentence of death; yet it was ſurely an ill-choſen time for a man perſecuted, and juſt eſcaped from danger of his own perſonal ſafety, to undertake the execution of purpoſes requiring great power! but this being nevertheleſs granted to be the caſe, what meaneth this bleating of ſheep, braying of aſſes, and lowing

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* The Doctor is deſired to turn to Joſhua xiii. 13. or to any other place where the Geſhurites are proſcribed. † See page 31.

lowing of oxen? and theſe Camels loaden with wearing apparel? * Surely David has not been guilty of the crime † which Saul is ſo heavily charged with? Yet this appears to be the caſe, and is no crime now! So true is that Engliſh proverb, that *one man may better ſteal, &c.*

The expedition being over, David returns to Achiſh; and to his interrogations where he had been making his inroad, returned him an anſwer, which you juſtify and affirm ‡ to be 'true 'but ambiguous.' Pray, Sir, if it was ambiguous, that is, if it had more meanings than one, what was the preciſe truth affirmed by it? and if it was rendered ambiguous with intention to deceive the perſon to whom it was addreſſed; can it be honoured with the ſacred name of truth? Think well, Sir, before you return an anſwer. You indeed accuſe ‖ him of even too much condeſcenſion 'for giving an ambiguous 'anſwer to a queſtion, which he was not obliged 'to give a direct reply to.' But this is no leſs abſurd than all the reſt. For, as David obtained an hoſpitable protection from Achiſh, he was certainly,

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* 1 Sam xxvii. 9.
† 1 Sam. xv. 9, &c.
‡ Page 153.
‖ Page 154.

certainly, in every ſenſe of the word, accountable to his benefactor for his public behaviour, while he remained in his territory.

David is next ſummoned to perform ſuit and ſervice to his patron, and march with him and the reſt of the Philiſtine princes to the invaſion of Judea, which he had before beguiled Achiſh into the opinion of his having ravaged himſelf. To ward off the charge of his compliance, you again bring *ambiguity* * to your aſſiſtance, the merits of which have already been examined.

You have now, however, no right even to ambiguity; for he actually obeyed! from whence do you infer his inſincerity? from the Philiſtine princes refuſing to accept his aſſiſtance? this only argues their diſtruſt; as they did not hear his reply to Achiſh: David's expreſſions on his diſmiſſion will not bear citing for this purpoſe. If you think they will, they are entirely at your ſervice. But as it ſo happens that you cannot deny the fact of his really marching with them, you proceed to argue from ſuppoſitions too futile to be ſeriouſly attended to. Do not accuſe the author of wanting to ſmother them, ſuch are

* Page 155.

are to be found in the page of the laſt reference.

You aſk the author* 'what a character he 'himſelf would have given David, had he be-'trayed his country for the ſake of Achiſh?' He replies, from a review of his ſituation, that David would not have deſerved a much better character, had he betrayed his benefactor for the ſake of his country.

In ſhort, David was now in ſuch a ſituation, that it was lucky for him the Philiſtine commanders concluded he would act treacherouſly; (he had, like every one elſe, a general character, it is to be ſuppoſed) for had he not been thus extricated, it was impoſſible for him to have performed an honourable part, let him have acted how he would. But, as you ſay; 'fortunately 'for David, his prudence, gratitude, and inte-'grity, were not put to ſo ſevere and difficult a 'trial.'

While David was abſent from Ziklag, in the Philiſtine army, the Amalekites ſeized the opportunity of revenging the former injury he had done them: which, notwithſtanding his pious precaution, cannot be ſuppoſed to paſs without being

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* Page 158.

being known, by them at leaſt. Here, becauſe you will not leave this poor author a rag to his back, you will not ſuffer his remark on the different conduct of David the aggreſſor, and the Amalekite retorters, to paſs unmoleſted; though it was too obvious to be unnoticed. David in his inroad, *ſmote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive!* The Amalekites, whether actuated by revenge, or only a like diſpoſition to plunder, it avails not; though you may poſſibly urge it; *ſlew not any, either great or ſmall!* How ſtriking the contract! If they came to avenge ſo ſavage an inſult, it ſhewed great conſideration in them to ſpare the innocent, the guilty being abſent: if they only came on the common thieving principle, the bare compariſon of the different treatment of the ſufferers in each inſtance, ſpeaks forcibly without amplification. You, Sir, too unguardedly, think proper to loſe ſight of David's aggreſſion, and enlarge on the heinous nature of the Amalekite proceedings. 'The women and 'children, ſay you *, they ſpared and took cap-'tives, not out of compaſſion and moderation, 'as this writer inſinuates; but becauſe they 'wanted

* Page 160.

'wanted ſlaves, either for their own uſe, or to 'make money of them, by ſelling them for 'ſlaves to any that would purchaſe them. And 'this I ſhould think a greater cruelty than the 'putting them to the ſword, and that the mode-'ration was on David's * ſide, rather than the 'Amalekites.'——The author intended here to hint that women-captives probably met better fates by being made wives of; but waved it from an apprehenſion that it might give you an advantage over him by your inſiſting on the averſion women have to pronounce the word *obey* in the marriage contract, to prove that even this would have been making ſlaves of them; more eſpecially in the eaſt! However, from the premiſes you have laid down, it is apprehended that David's treatment of his vanquiſhed enemies †, in another inſtance, had better been left alone by you; ſince the deaths he is there ſuppoſed to have put them to, however ſhocking they may appear, are thus more moderate than that ſlavery into which you endeavour ‡ to moderate them! This is handing him deeper into the mire, under pretence

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* Meaning in the *conſequent* purſuit and ſlaughter.

† 2 Sam. xii. 31. ‡ Page 187, &c.

tence of helping him out. 'What evil genius 'tempted the man to turn critic!'

You proceed *. 'I affirm laſtly, that he '(David) did well in extirpating them (the Ama-'lekites) as they were proſcribed by God him-'ſelf, and condemned to be utterly cut off.' Had David been then in a ſituation to put ſuch decrees in execution, with reſpect both to character and ability; had he urged this proſcription to authorize the butchery; and laſtly, had not plunder been the ſole actuating motive, as appears both by the ſpecification of it, and by his alleged reaſon for the maſſacre; the maſſacre might be juſtified upon Hebrew principles: but from the circumſtances of the tranſaction you are even deprived of them! So that the badneſs of your reaſoning is not at all to be wondered at.

The author is unwilling to aſcribe your apologies for Jewiſh cruelties, to a natural barbarity of diſpoſition in you; it is rather deducible from another ſource: you have read theſe annals until blood is familiar to you; and your ideas of right and wrong are abſolutely confounded!

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* Page 160.

This error, however, it might have been hoped the amiable precepts of Jeſus Chriſt would have corrected; but even theſe are ineffectual antidotes: for you threaten the author with perſonal *Peril* * for conſidering this adventure in any other than the accepted light. How different this behaviour is from that of the great founder of the religion you have ſo long taught, need not be inſiſted on: it is much too evident!

David's treatment of the Amalekite, who brought him the welcome news of Saul's death, and claimed the merit of it, is agreeable to the cuſtomary rules of politics; and has nothing therefore remarkable in it, farther than it was rendered by peculiar circumſtances. Saul was ſaid to be rejected by God, and David was the pretender to his throne; it was therefore imagined this man might have had ſome claim to his private gratitude, eſpecially conſidering the account the Amalekite gave of the matter. However, it is not inſiſted on. David's lamentation over Saul, ſtill appears with all the marks of inſincerity it did before; his grief for Jonathan, whoſe love toward him was *wonderful, paſſing the*

* Page 160.

the love of women, was perhaps ſuitable: though the figure expreſſing this love, without any uncharitable inferences, is certainly not well choſen.

On the death of Saul, when David repaired to Hebron, and was there anointed king over Judah; the author had remarked, that he did not ſeem to claim in right of the ſacred unction beſtowed on him long ſince by Samuel: to this you reply *, 'this is a very injudicious obſervation, to ſay the leaſt of it; for David had no 'other title to the ſucceſſion, but the appointment of God by Samuel; and this claim on 'which he founded his pretenſions, was univerſally known to the people of Iſrael, and the 'avowed reaſon why they advanced him to the 'throne.' To this it may be anſwered, that he claimed his title as ſoon as he could make it out; by the law of force. If his divine title to the Hebrew crown was univerſally known, and if, as you ſay, Iſhboſheth had none at all †, how came David's title not to be univerſally acknowledged? Did only one tribe believe in it? Yet David with the divine grant was obliged to obtain the ſovereignty by arms and intrigue! juſt for

* Page 164. † Page 165.

for all the world like the wicked, who attain ends by the ſame means to all external appearance! It is true, Abner at length intereſted himſelf in the accompliſhment of this grant, but obſerve, it was not until his zeal was excited by a perſonal affront relating to a concubine! ſo that it is doubtful whether he really believed in it or no.

The appellations pretender and uſurper, you ſay *, belong more properly to Iſhboſheth:—yet there is no irregularity hinted at in Iſhboſheth's ſucceeding his father; nor any commotion on his acceſſion †; which is rather uncommon under ſuch circumſtances.

Your obſervations on David's conqueſt of the city of Jeruſalem ‡, if they prove any thing, prove that you, with the aſſiſtance of Hebrew, are as far from aſcertaining doubtful points, as the author can be with only plain Engliſh.

In treating of the wars of David, you muſt, though it is hard to know wherefore, drag Saul in again; with whom we now have nothing farther to do. If Saul did wrong, you know he was rejected, and no one will perhaps intereſt

* Page 172.

† Except what David excited. ‡ P. 173, &c.

himſelf in defending his reputation. Yet you take ſo many occaſions to impeach him, that it were as eaſy to review *your* Hiſtory of him, as you have done this of David: be this, however, the taſk of ſome one elſe, and reſume we the review of David. Your reaſon * for ſuppoſing David to ſhew favour to Gath in his wars with the Philiſtines, is not ſufficient to eſtabliſh the fact, or even the extraordinary probability of it; all theſe people being frequently introduced, after mention of total ſlaughter: the invaſions were partial, and fugitives no doubt returning to their ſettlements, when the maroders were gone. You are likewiſe, Sir, very earneſt to alter the proportion in which he ſlaughtered the Moabites†, from two-thirds to one-half: you are extreamly welcome to the difference, if it will do David any material ſervice. You allege, to juſtify his wars with the Philiſtines and Moabites, a league ‡ among theſe neighbouring nations againſt Iſrael. If ſo, as may be very naturally ſuppoſed, it was a very juſtifiable compact; Iſrael being a common enemy, who ravaged them *ad libitum*, not from

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* Page 178. † Ibid. ‡ Page 181.

from the common miſunderſtandings among ſtates, but from an inſatiable appetite for blood and plunder.

When you get particular notions in your head, you ſwell your book greatly with the parade of numerous citations, either dwelling upon, or digreſſing from, the point in hand, frequently to very little purpoſe; as may be ſeen in p. 182, 3, 4. now open before the writer: and in many others.

To palliate David's cruel treatment of the Ammonites, you inſiſt on their king's ill uſage of David's ambaſſadors ſent to congratulate him on his acceſſion, after the death of his father. 'Hanun, ſay you *, inſtead of receiving them as 'the ambaſſadors of ſo great a prince, and ſent 'on ſo polite and humane an errand, was pre-'vailed on by his princes, to regard them as 'ſpies, and treated them with the vileſt indig-'nity.'——Ambaſſadors are ſpies by the very nature of their employment, but tolerated among ſtates by mutual conſent. Theſe, however, were conſidered as ſuch in a much more particular manner: the princes ſay to Hanun †,

 thinkeſt

* Page 185. † 2 Sam. x. 3.

thinkeſt thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath ſent comforters unto thee? Hath not David rather ſent his ſervants unto thee, to ſearch the city, and to ſpy it out, and to overthrow it? Credit theſe repreſentations with having ſome foundation in truth at that time; the Jews being a people always to be ſuſpected; and then theſe ambaſſadors are but treated accordingly; conſidering the times.

You are carefully intrenched, Sir, in your expoſitions; you firſt endeavour by various trials to alter the meanings of paſſages; and leſt they ſhould fail you, frequently, as in this inſtance *, attempt a juſtification of the literal acceptation: arguing again, as in the caſe of Nabal, an improbable degree of provocation meaſured from that of the revenge: for you are engaged to defend at all adventures.

Bringing his wars together into one ſection, you, from juſtifying his barbarities, proceed to prove him merciful; and remark concerning the civil war headed by Abſalom, thus ‡. 'After 'the civil war between David and Abſalom, we 'read

* Page 189. 190. 191. ‡ 191.

'read of no bloody executions for treaſon and 'rebellion.' The reaſon, Sir, ſpeaks for itſelf, though it has eſcaped your penetration. This revolt was ſo general, that David was obliged to fly even from his capital: and when it was ſuppreſſed, it was immediately ſucceeded by another, ſo that David no doubt thought it adviſeable to ſit down contented with his re-eſtabliſhment. Recrimination at this ſeaſon would have been ſcarcely leſs than a general proſcription: and was too hazardous to attempt. This plea of inability, which you urge for his not calling Joab to account for the murder of Amaſa *, is equally valid in the general ſenſe in which it is here applied; where you would aſcribe to his mercy and forgiveneſs, what flowed from policy, conſidering the precarioufneſs of his ſituation.

Following the order in which you have introduced your facts, we now attend to the return of the ark. The ſtrange crime of Uzzah, who, poor man, ſome how or other loſt his life for his good-nature, is thus conſidered by you in the enſuing words †; which will perhaps be made

* Page 195. † Page 197.

to read, by the introduction of a word or two to render it intelligible. 'Doth he [this author] 'think that the Lord of Hoſt, to whom it be-'longed, could not have ſaved it, without his '[Uzzah] doing what it was abſolutely unlawful 'for him to do?' If the Lord would have ſaved it, becauſe he could, it may in the ſame manner be argued, that he *would* have brought it to any place where he intended it to be: and that therefore David was impertinently officious. But with reſpect to Uzzah, if *the Lord ſeeth not as man ſeeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart* *; the man's intention was indiſputably good; and the alleged crime ſurely pardonable: the ſeeming exigency precluding all heſitation and reflexion. Had the ark been really overturned for want of this careful prevention, Uzzah might with greater plauſibility have been ſmote for his omiſſion, than he was for his commiſſion. But you ſay, the Levites ſhould have carried it on their own ſhoulders; that in their neglecting it, they conſulted their eaſe more than their duty; and, that this was an offence of no ſmall aggravation †. Was Uzzah

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* 1 Sam. xvi. 7. † Page 197.

Uzzah then to be puniſhed for the lazineſs of the prieſts?

You clothe David, in this proceſſion of the ark, in a compleat prieſt's habit: but David was not a prieſt, either by office or tribe: the Ephod it is true, was part of the prieſt's dreſs: there were, you know, two kinds, one peculiar to the High Prieſt; and a common one, worn by the prieſts in general: but from the caſe in hand, it is probable it was worn by others on peculiar ſolemn occaſions. David wore one now; together with *a* robe of fine linen: which, that you may effectually ſecure him from being liable to the indecencies his wife Michal was witneſs to, you will have to be *the* prieſt's robe, cloſe down to the feet. The linen robe was, as you allow *, put on by David for coolneſs, and the ephod was probably put over it to give it ſomething of a ſolemn appearance; but had this robe been *that* robe, which was cloſe round, flowing down to the feet, it would have been very inconvenient for a man dancing *with all his might.*

* Page 199, 200.

You aſcribe the ridicule his wife Michal caſt on him to his being diveſted of his regal attire *. But if, as you ſay, he appeared as a prieſt, ſhe would not have ſcoffed at him in that manner, though you can maintain ſuch a ſuppoſition †; for we have no other inſtance of an ill diſpoſition in her, farther than what is generally inferred from this: David had been indebted to her affection for his life ‡: neither would ſhe in that caſe have alluded to the vain fellows who openly uncovered themſelves. The parallel would not hold, Sir; unleſs it were in virtue of your new theory of *uncovery* ‖, which may firſt adorn theſe vain fellows with kingly robes; and then by *uncovering* them, ſignify the putting them off and the *putting on* the habits of a prieſt! If ſhe meant all this, ſhe certainly deſerved to be excluded from child-bearing.

When David deprived Mephiboſheth of his poſſeſſions, on being accuſed by his ſteward Ziba; and upon diſcovery of the calumny appears to have reſtored him but half the penalty of his ſuppoſed guilt, you ſay §, 'there might 'be

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* Page 201. † Page 202. ‡ 1 Sam. xix. 11—17.
‖ Page 128. note. § Page 205.

'be reaſons of ſtate, reaſons of great prudence 'and equity, that might induce David at that 'time, *to give this check to the houſe of Saul*; 'eſpecially as Shimei, one of Saul's family, had 'uſed him with peculiar marks of indignity, 'and diſcovered that they wanted only the op-'portunity to revenge themſelves on him, and 'place one of Saul's houſe upon the throne of 'Iſrael.'

This is one of your pleas. The *might be*, however is not to be underſtood as your real opinion; for here, as in your review of David's treatment of the Ammonites, you rather ſtart a number of ſuppoſitions guarded againſt every judgment that may be formed of a tranſaction, than ſeem to have any ſettled opinion of your own. Thus, in the preſent caſe, leſt the politic check to the houſe of Saul ſhould fail, you back it with a confirmation of the charge againſt Mephiboſheth, ſuppoſed by Mr. Hallet *. Not quite confident of the weight of this opinion, however, you confuſe us with a third contained in theſe words †. 'We have already ſeen that 'David, by the original grant, gave the pro-'perty

* Page 205. note. † Page 206.

'perty of the whole patrimony to Mephibosheth, 'but so as that Ziba, his fifteen sons, and twenty 'servants, were to be maintained out of it for 'cultivating the estate; which was a proper di-'vision of it between Mephibosheth and Ziba. If a person undertakes the stewardship of an estate, it is true the estate is understood to subsist him; but what steward was ever understood to *divide* the estate with his master? Granting however, any division to be made, and the entire property afterward to be vested in Ziba, on his treacherous slander; by what rule in morals or politics was Ziba continued on the estate, on the original compact, when his villainy was discovered? You affirm indeed *, that 'it was not as 'the reward of his treachery, but out of respect 'even to Saul, of whose house Ziba was, and 'as a recompence for that seasonable and noble 'supply that he brought him (David) when he 'was forced to abandon the capital.—Surely, respect to the house of Saul would have been better shewn by favour to the injured Mephibosheth, than to his servant; especially when that servant proved so vile a traitor! and were the designing

* Page 207.

ſigning kind offices of a traitor to blind all attention to the crime to which they were owing; when that crime was manifeſted? But having juſt before ſuppoſed this partition intended to give a check to the houſe of Saul, you here repreſent it as a deed of reſpect toward it! You now poſſibly may have ſome other expoſition of it ready, which you are heartily welcome to ſupply, if you are ſo diſpoſed.

You are next, Sir, attended to the memorable ſtory of the unfortunate Uriah! Little need be ſaid by the author reſpecting this complicated crime of David, as it is condemned in the relation, and *therefore* by every one beſide. Some obſervations, however, which you have made relating to it, could not be overlooked, and your attention is requeſted on their account, for a few moments.

Adulterers, as you ſay, were to be puniſhed with death. True. Will a holy perſon then, *deliberately*, influence another with him to incur this penalty? Deliberation is inſiſted on: ſince had David and Bathſheba been caſually together, a ſudden guſt of paſſion might, as you ſay it did *, ‘ hurry

* Page 208.

'hurry him away without allowing him time for 'deliberation.' But this was not the caſe The temptation was diſtant, ſo that, though his paſſion was fired with the ſight, he had not only time for recollection, but was alſo amply provided with the means of cooling it again, at home. But neither did he make uſe of either of theſe opportunities!—he ſent and enquired after this woman whom he ſaw bathing;—found ſhe was the wife of one of his officers, but—nevertheleſs cauſed her to be brought to him, as every one knows! Let any impartial perſon decide what right David has to the excuſe of being hurried into a precipitate gratification of his paſſion! and whether this was not a crime 'peculiarly aggravated by previous deliberate 'ſteps!'

Even after all that you have hitherto urged in juſtification of David's character, it was thought hardly poſſible, Sir, for you to extract a compliment to it, out of this greateſt acknowledged crime he ever committed! Yet have you addreſs enough to perform it! You trace the neceſſity of Uriah's death, as the only means to ſave the other parties; and then aſk*, 'But 'how

* Page 210.

'how was Uriah to be got rid of? Poiſon, aſ-
'ſaſſination, or a falſe charge of treaſon, or ſome
'ſecret way of deſtruction, were the methods
'that the eaſtern princes were well acquainted
'with. David was above them all, and had a
'kind of generoſity even in his very crimes. He
'cauſes him to fall in the bed of honour, glo-
'rioufly fighting againſt the enemies of his king
'and country.' Generous David! Incomparable apologiſt!

And he wrote in the letter, ſaying, Set ye Uriah in the fore-front of the hotteſt battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be ſmitten and die. What an amiable quality is generoſity!

As you eſteem David's delivery of ſeven of Saul's poſterity to be hanged by the Gibeonites, to be 'one of the moſt unexceptionable parts of 'his behaviour as a king, and an illuſtrious proof 'of the *generoſity* of his temper, &c.' * it deſerves ſome examination.

That Saul *might* have injured theſe Gibeonites, was not denied; ſo that your reflexions on this ſuppoſition † are nothing worth. It was then, and is ſtill, thought remarkable, that there was no

* Page 215. † Page 224.

no chronological record of a fact, which after ſuch a length of time demanded an expiation ſo awfully hinted, and ſo extraordinary in its circumſtances! The hiſtory ſaid *, that after many years, God 'puniſhes—whom? a whole nation; 'with three years famine: which, by the bye, 'was not ſent as a puniſhment neither; but 'meerly as a hint of remembrance'—but it was a calamity nevertheleſs: ſo that your ſneering enquiry whether, as it was not a puniſhment, it might not be a bleſſing, or ſomething between both? † is, like many other archneſſes of a ſimilar nature, hardly becoming the character of a doctor in divinity!

Among theſe is the quibble by which you affect to make the author intend the duration of the civil wars, when he expreſſes that of the famine ‡, But away with ſuch children's play of *make believe!*

There is no reaſoning poſitively about facts ſo obſcurely referred to. 'The crime, you ſay ||, 'was——enormous and highly aggravated; a 'crime,

* Page 74. † Page 222.
‡ Preface, p. 26. Review, p. 217. || P. 220.

'crime, if any could be ſo, that was—*Deo vin-*
'*dice dignum*,—and which, though the puniſh-
'ment of it was long deferred, through a train of
'intervening unavoidable circumſtances, was ne-
'vertheleſs worthy to be retaliated by providence,
'upon the firſt opportunity that was favourable
'for the purpoſe.' In verity, Sir, you make very free with Providence! What muſt your notions of Providence be, that can plead a train of intervening *unavoidable* circumſtances, as impediments to its operations; and can repreſent it as taking the firſt *favourable* opportunity to reſume them?

A three years famine over a country, to procure the hanging of ſeven men, may be very reconcileable with your conception of Providence, though hardly with ſome propoſitions before laid down: however, the oracle is ſaid to have anſwered, *It is for Saul, and for his bloody houſe, becauſe he* * *ſlew the Gibeonites.* From this you infer †, that 'The perſons employed with Saul
'in perpetrating theſe murders, were thoſe of his
'*own houſe*. He thought the deſtruction of theſe
'Gibeonites ſo popular a thing, as that he was
'reſolved

* Not *they*. † Page 221.

'resolved himself, his family, and relations should 'have the whole credit of it.' And therefore, unassisted either by particular record, or reason, you 'think it is probable, from the choice that 'David made, that the very persons he gave 'up were employed in this butchery.' *—These are represented † to be 'the two bastard sons of 'Rispah his concubine, and the five sons of his 'eldest daughter.'——Here probability decides against you, unless you can account why Saul, who, according to you, resolved that himself and family should have the credit of this action, chose two of his bastards to assist him in it without associating his legitimate sons, particularly Jonathan; an able warrior, in the commission? and can prove that five of his grandsons were then born, and of an age to lend a hand also. Not to mention the inconsistency of supposing a prince to associate himself and children to commit actions always referred to soldiers as their proper office.

There is, however, another reason why you select Saul's bastard children and grand-children as help-mates in this odd massacre. After establishing that by *the seed* expressed in the oath between

* Page 221. † Page 217.

between Saul and David, the male line only is to be underſtood, as if Saul relinquiſhed all care for the female, you add *, 'But David gave up 'only the ſons of Saul's concubine, who were 'not the legal ſeed of Saul, and thoſe of his 'eldeſt daughter, who could only keep up 'Adriel's name, and not Saul's; and hereby 'conſcientiouſly obſerved, without the leaſt vio-'lation, his oath to Saul.' Yes, Sir, with the help of that mental reſervation in all his expreſſions with which you ſo often credit him. The reaſon, therefore, appears now, why Saul's baſtards and *grandchildren* were ſo ſtrangely pitched upon by you for his inſtruments in the maſſacre, leſt your ſyſtem of expiation ſhould be overturned.

It is to be ſuppoſed, Sir, from your continued method of arguing, that you never read of commotions excited in a ſtate by illegitimate children; or by deſcendants in a female line; elſe you might poſſibly have allowed now as you did once before †, that 'reaſons of great prudence '—might induce David to give this check to the 'houſe of Saul; eſpecially as Shimei, one of

 'Saul's

* Page 227. † Page 205.

'Saul's family, had uſed him with peculiar marks 'of indignity, and diſcovered that they wanted 'only the opportunity to revenge themſelves on 'him, and place one of Saul's houſe upon the 'throne of Iſrael.'

Mephiboſheth, whom David took care to keep under his own eye, having ſuch a ſhocking ſcene to contemplate, might, as he really was, conſidering his decrepitude, with little hazard be preſerved; as an evidence of probity in this pious king. Your table of his deſcendants *, is of no farther uſe than as it ſerves to countenance the declamatory ſtring of ironical, ſcoffing, and panegyrical ſentences which cloſe this ſection of your work: ſince you have no clearer evidence of Mephiboſheth having any grandchildren born at that time, than you have to prove that Saul *and his grandchildren* maſſacred the Gibeonites.

David's numbering the people, is the next ſubject for the exerciſe of your critical powers! The author of the hiſtory, after ſtating the circumſtances of this fact, choſe to decline any farther diſcuſſion of it, as ſurpaſſing any abilities he can boaſt, to reconcile with our preſent ſceptical and depraved

* Page 228.

depraved conceptions. Now, however, that he is aſſiſted with your mature reflexions, he will hazard a few curſory obſervations on them.

The tranſlation, by comparing two paſſages together, affirms David to have been moved both by God and Satan, to number his people. You ſeem to be clear, that it could not be God who tempted him: and as to the Devil you make any body of him, but rather ſuppoſe him to have been one of David's courtiers! * It is pretty clear that this ſame courtier was frequently whiſpering in his royal maſter's ear. Upon farther enquiry, however, the crime imputed to David on this occaſion, was his remitting the head-money always to be paid at ſuch general reviews †. This calls for divine puniſhment: and who was the proper object for puniſhment is the queſtion. If we ſay it is hard, David thus actuated by inviſible agency, ſhould ſuffer as a principal; you reply ‡, 'But doth he not know, that a man 'may be hanged for a crime, to which his in-'dictment ſays: *he was moved by the Devil*; and 'becauſe the Devil moved him, is he therefore 'a paſſive inſtrument, and free from guilt? Doth

* Page 235. † Page 237. ‡ Page 236.

'he really think, that the Devil ought to be tried 'and hanged, inſtead of the man whom he 'tempted?' In anſwer to theſe queries it may be hinted, that by human laws we hang the man, becauſe the man perpetrated the fact; but for *God* to puniſh the inſtrument of a purpoſe, confeſſedly over-ruled to the execution of that purpoſe by ſupernatural influence; would be juſt as if *we* ſhould convict the *knife* or the *piſtol* at the Old Bailey, and diſcharge the criminal! If it appears odd that the people (one remove ſtill farther from the author of the crime) ſhould be puniſhed for the fault of their king; you anſwer *, 'Perhaps it may help to ſet the thing a little even 'with him [the writer] when I put my reader 'in mind; that kings are no otherwiſe to be pu-'niſhed in their regal capacities, nor oftentimes 'to be brought to correct the errors of their 'adminiſtration, but by public calamities; by 'famine, peſtilence, foreign wars, domeſtic 'convulſions, or ſome other like diſtreſſes that 'affect their people.'—Perhaps it would ſet the ſubject ſtill more even, were you to eſtabliſh this poſition by authority more convincing than meer *ipſe*

* Page 238.

ipſe dixit. Your logic, however, is ſeen in the immediately enſuing words to the former: 'and 'if it be right at all for God to animadvert on 'the conduct of princes, or to ſhew his diſplea-'ſure againſt them for the public errors of their 'adminiſtration, it muſt be right and fit for him 'to afflict their people; and indeed this is no-'thing more than what continually happens in 'the common courſe of providence.'—If then, as you ſay, from ordinary occurrences, *and from nothing more*, it is evident God puniſhes and admoniſhes princes by thoſe occurrences; it is no wonder they profit ſo little by theſe leſſons given to others, and which they now have no infallible oracle to interpret for them. For, as oracles have been long ſince diſcredited, and *therefore* not continued; the common courſe of providence muſt either go on in vain, reſpecting this main purpoſe of its movement; or elſe entirely ſtop.

The opinion of Grotius cited by you *, that *acerbiſſimum eſt delinquentibus regibus ſupplicium, id quod populis infligitur*; can be determined only by fact, whether they themſelves really

 think

* Page 239. note.

think ſo: and it is pretty evident that Grotius was not a king.

You have, however, other cauſes to urge for this peſtilence; namely *, that it might be a judgment on the people for not remonſtrating againſt the numeration crime of their king; or for their not preſſing the payment of the capitation tax, though not demanded of them; or for their other tranſgreſſions! In truth, there is no end of following you through all your ſhifts, turnings and windings: theſe ſuggeſtions being your own, and no crime being charged on the people in the Bible, the writer does not think himſelf under obligation to be farther troubled with them.

As to Nathan the prophet, he was certainly nettled at the ſlight put on him, and ſome others; in not being invited to Adonijah's feaſt: elſe he would not have inſiſted on that circumſtance; which had better been waved. You have been at ſome pains to render the ſuppoſition ridiculous, but the probability of Nathan's being corrupted, was not ſurely leſs than that of David's ſons †; who, yet all of them, except Solomon, (who, had he been invited, had ſome private reaſons to the

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* Page 239. † 1 Kings i. 9. 19. 25.

the contrary, which their proceedings ſhew them to have been aware of) were agreeable to ſettling the ſucceſſion on their elder brother; though certainly as much intereſted in the diſpoſal of the kingdom, as Nathan could be.

It muſt be owned, that you have fairly caught the writer off his guard, when he quoted a verſe from a pſalm, which happened not to be the production of David. It was in the collection under his name, and was careleſsly pitched on without due thought of the general tenor of it. *Humanum eſt errare*, Doctor, and though you have here an advantage *over the writer*, it can be converted to but ſmall uſe toward a general exculpation of David; and inaccuracies of expreſſion ſtill leſs ſo; though by you greatly inſiſted on.

You plead *, that 'there are ſo many traces 'of a benevolent ſpirit in David's conduct 'and pſalms, as leave little room for the accu-'ſation of his being of a rancorous and impla-'cable ſpirit even to his worſt enemies, for whom 'he frequently prayed; and to whom he often 'rendered good for evil.'—The benevolence of

* Page 254.

David's conduct has been ſufficiently examined into, and the good which he returned to his enemies, reaſoning from his conduct, was moſt probably confined wholly *to his prayers*: like the mercy of the Holy Courts of Inquiſition.

The book of pſalms being a collection of various compoſition, many of which have no name prefixed to them, and their expreſſions ſo general; little poſitive can be affirmed about them: at leaſt, if we attended to commentators, among whom we might hope to find agreement, and therefore from whom, if from any, we might expect to gain ſatisfaction.

Many of thoſe aſcribed to David do not, however, warrant your character of them; and there is no arguing againſt facts to ward off the charge of inconſiſtency.

But, ſay you *, 'it ſhould be remarked, that 'in the far greater number of thoſe places, where 'there appear to be direct imprecations in our 'verſion, there are none in the original †; in 'which

* Pag. 253. † You refer particularly to the 109th pſalm; as 'a moſt remarkable inſtance': other Hebrew critics, however, ſay that thoſe contained in that pſalm *are imprecations*; but that they are only there related by David as thoſe of his enemies on him! What therefore, in the name of criticiſm, are they?

'which the verb is in the future tenſe, inſtead of 'the imperative; and ſo is only declarative of 'what ſhould be the conſequence, inſtead of the 'pſalmiſt's wiſh of what he would have it be.' What a ſtrange tranſlation then are we amuſed with, if this is univerſally the caſe! and if the meaning of the pſalms is ſo injuriouſly perverted, how can we pretend even to gueſs at the meaning of any other part? And yet, Doctor, the *acceptance* and *uſe* of our tranſlation through ſo many generations of Hebrew critics, ſeem to argue its imperfections not to be quite ſo groſs as, for the ſake of your hero, you now chuſe to repre-them.

This argument, though it may be thought ſufficient of itſelf, if eſtabliſhed, to clear David from the charge of vindictiveneſs; yet, as in other caſes, you are careful to provide againſt its failing you, by urging the wickedneſs of David's enemies to countenance his bitter denunciations againſt them; and refer us to David for a character of them *. But it is hardly fair to accept any perſon's character of his enemy; ſince reſentment makes us ſee through a wrong medium. The expreſſions in which wickedneſs is imputed to theſe people in the pſalms, flows naturally

* Page 252.

naturally enough from a people who eſteemed themſelves a nation peculiarly favoured by God; but ought to be looked upon rather as expreſſive of their own ſuperiority in that reſpect, and hatred and contempt for their neighbours, than as indications of the real wickedneſs of theſe people.

But, you ſay, no charge of barbarity can lie againſt David for many deſcriptive paſſages of the horrors of war in his pſalms *: for that, if this author wiſhes his country ſucceſs againſt its enemies, he wiſhes deſtruction to them, which deſtruction is attended with all thoſe calamitous conſequences mentioned by David. True, Sir, very true; but then it ſhews a propenſity to cruelty to *dwell ſo minutely*, and with ſeeming pleaſure, upon circumſtances of horror in our ſongs, like the North-American Indians; which a humane generous mind feels pain in thinking of, and is pleaſed with being relieved from.

Your next apology for David reſpects his behaviour to Shimei. You tax him with falſe accuſation againſt David, in calling him *a bloody man:* it being, as you obſerve, before the affair of

* Page 249.

of the Gibeonites: aſking * 'in what other re-'ſpect could David be guilty of the blood of 'Saul's houſe?' Sir! he took up arms againſt Saul, in virtue of a claim to ſuperſede him: he aſſociated with, and promiſed aſſiſtance to, the enemies of his country; by whom Saul and three of his ſons periſhed: he conteſted the dominion with Iſhboſheth, whom he harraſſed to the grave. Foundation ſufficient to charge him with guilt of the blood of Saul's houſe. But you add †, that Shimei 'retracts all he had ſaid, owns him-'ſelf a ſlanderer and a liar, and begs pardon for 'his abuſive impudence.' He did ſo, and upon the change in the fortune of David, is in that as juſtifiable in point of prudence, as he was cenſurable before in point of raſhneſs. To give David the diſintereſted merit of ſparing his life, you aſk ‡, 'what there was in the ſeaſon to pre-'vent David from puniſhing a treaſonable reviler 'as he deſerved? Enough! David was rather in a diſagreeable plight at that time, and Shimei a man of ſome conſideration; as appears after-ward:

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* Page 261. † Page 262.
‡ Page 265.

ward: both which conſiderations rendered it unadviſeable to ſilence this brawler then.

Conſequences proving that in David's oath there would need ſome equivocation to excuſe him in his dying charge to Solomon; you limit the extent of the obligation he laid himſelf under, to the day in which he made it *: from which you eſtabliſh that 'David violated no 'oath, if he actually ordered Solomon to put 'him to death. But, Sir, probity is greatly wounded by ſuch excuſes. *Tantum religio poteſt ſuadere!*

To juſtify David ſtill more in this inſtance, you paraphraſe his order to Solomon, making him ſay †—'clear him not, therefore, as I did, '*if thou findeſt him guilty of any male practices*; 'but his hoar head bring down unto the grave 'with blood'—But there appears no conditional clauſe in David's ſpeech, the injunction is poſitive. However, as you love amplifying, the author will ſupply a far more ſuitable paraphraſe of that part of his ſpeech, as follows,—'It is 'true, *I* promiſed not to put him to death, but '*thou*

* Page 272. † Page 268.

'*thou* art a wiſe man, and knoweſt what thou 'oughteſt to do: *thou* knoweſt thyſelf not to be 'bound by that obligation; therefore his hoar 'head, &c.'—which is far more explanatory of his right meaning.

You confirm your paraphraſe, from Solomon's different treatment of Joab and Shimei. You allow the injunction to be poſitive reſpecting Joab, becauſe he immediately put him to death; whereas he only confined Shimei to Jeruſalem, under the penalty of death *. But this was owing to a different cauſe. Joab, by joining the party of Adonijah, had furniſhed that pretence, which Shimei does not appear to have done †; notwithſtanding you have aſſerted his readineſs to join any meaſures to diſturb David's government ‡. Joab, therefore, was aſſaſſinated, and Shimei watched. The writer has the ſatisfaction to find his opinion not diſcountenanced by the learned Houbigant, in the paſſage you have quoted.

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* Page 270. † 1 Kings i. 8.

‡ Page 268. You here indeed ſuppoſe him to have been in Abſalom's rebellion, but this is unſupported by any authority excepting your own.

quoted *. — EXPECTAVIT *Solomon donec Semei reus eſſet, ut eum morte plecteret:* and he took care not to loſe the firſt ſpecious pretence to effect it.

Were it poſſible to eſtabliſh the doctrine of temporal judgments from thoſe inſtances, wherein the chance-medley † of human occurrences has fulfilled the *lex talionis*; the caſe of Joab might certainly be produced as evidence: that aſſaſſination, by which he cut off Abner and Amaſa, being at length his own lot! You ſay ‡, 'I allow David's dying order in this inſtance to be 'peremptory and abſolute.' From what premiſes do you allow it? your allowance can only be drawn, without due conſideration, from Solomon's conduct in obedience to this notable teſtament. It is, however, a condeſcenſion not to be overlooked; ſince, in granting one to be abſolute, you grant the other alſo: the terms dictating each, being equally ſtrong; nay, almoſt in the very ſame words.

After

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* Page 269. note.

† Matthew v. 45. Luke xiii. 4.

‡ Page 273.

After mentioning Joab's crimes, David proceeds : *Do therefore according to thy wiſdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.*

After his accuſation of Shimei, and giving his ſon the reaſon why he had not put him to death himſelf, he adds : *Now therefore hold him not guiltleſs : for thou art a wiſe man, and knoweſt what thou oughteſt to do unto him ; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.*

Joab, however, though far from being a good man, yet on the whole deſerved a better legacy from David. His ſervices had been long and important ; and though, concerning his killing the falſe Abner, you not only charge him with revenge for his brother's death, but allege * his 'probably envying him the glory of ſettling Da-'vid on the throne of Iſrael :' yet this admits of a doubt. For he was apprehenſive of a different conſequence ; and hearing that Abner had been with David, expoſtulates † with him on the imprudence of truſting ſuch a man among them : ſaying, *he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going*

* Page 274. † 2 Sam. iii. 24. 25.

going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doſt. Probably Joab did not know the ſtory of the concubine. He therefore appears (uniting his revenge with the deed) to have acted baſely for David's ſervice.

Joab was really ill uſed in the affair of Amaſa: which yet is not ſaid to exculpate him. Even here, however, he confined his reſentment to his rival; and though he muſt be juſtly provoked at David's ingratitude, yet he ſtill continued faithful to his king. His defection at laſt may perhaps admit of being interpreted into a patronization of that particular plan for the ſucceſſion, rather than into a rebellion againſt the ſuperannuated monarch.

David, in his lamentation for Abner, had declared the Lord to be the rewarder of the evil doer *: by this expreſſion referring the puniſhment of Joab to the Lord. Having, therefore, enjoyed the benefit of Joab's ſervices through his life, he having been his right hand all along; gratitude, after ſuch a long attachment, ought to have influenced him to have then left him to that

* 2 Sam. iii. 39.

that juſtice of God; and not have bequeathed him *death* as a legacy for his long friendſhip!

The panegyric at the cloſe of your Review, on the piety of David, is little worth, after the diſcuſſion of the foregoing points. That part of it inſiſting on his always adhering to the religion of his country *, is ſtill leſs ſo; a bad man not being an honour to any religion. No concluſive argument for his goodneſs can be drawn from his poetic compoſitions †, experience proving the beſt poets to be frequently very far from being the beſt men.

You, Sir, and the world, now ſee the authorities and principles from which the Hiſtory of the Man after God's own Heart was deduced; which, in a ſecond edition, may poſſibly appear ſtill leſs liable to objection in particular places: and an appeal is hazarded to the candid, even of all perſuaſions, whether it merits the verboſe abuſive character ‡ you have given it: as 'putting forced conſtructions on particular paſſages; 'invidious inſinuations, where there is nothing 'in the hiſtory to ſupport them: improbable ſug-

 'geſtions

* Page 282. † Page 283. ‡ Page 295.

'geſtions to eke out facts, or ſupply the place 'of them; falſe aſſertions contrary to the truth 'of hiſtory, to furniſh matter for calumny and 'reviling; in a word, all methods contrary to 'truth and honour, and inconſiſtent with the 'rules of humanity, candor and juſtice.' What may be your latent motive for throwing out ſuch inflammatory expreſſions is left to yourſelf to brood on; but unleſs they had been better ſupported in point of verity, they are not very indicative of the gentleman, not to mention you by any other character.

It has been urged, that this writer has but revived old objections long ſince refuted. It is true, that ſuch of them as have appeared before, have been often replied to; but a reply does not neceſſarily imply a refutation. Objections of this nature have been replied to from the beginning, and are likely ſo to be to the end: and what is worthy noting, many dogmas are now exploded, the objections to which have heretofore been thought to be entirely refuted!

You have been pleaſed, Sir, to attribute to the writer a latent intention of ſubverting the Goſpel conſtitution *: and have indeed framed an

* Preface, page 29.

an ingenious chain of deductions for that purpoſe; which however will not be employed, unleſs by yourſelf. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, it is true, is frequently termed *the ſon of David:* but with what degree of propriety yourſelf ſhall judge. You eſtabliſh *, that---'the ſeed is always reckoned by the males, and not the females of a family, and (that) the name in a father's houſe could only be preſerved by the male deſcendants.'——in which reſpect Jeſus Chriſt was *not* a ſon of David †: therefore this connexion is deſtroyed.

The doctrines of chriſtianity, eſpecially the preceptive ones, taken from his own mouth, cannot to all appearance be affected by inſiſting on the character of David, whether good or bad; right ſorry would this author be if they reſted on any ſuch dependance. The divine tendency of theſe doctrines is ſo manifeſt; they are ſo refined in their own nature, that they will ever claim the moſt exalted reverence from mankind, to them and to their glorious publiſher, independant on all foreign contingencies, on all former narrow tenets, and ſuperſtitious

* Review, page 227. † Matthew i. 18, &c.

ſtitious rites ; which he has ſo totally ſuperſeded among his profeſſors : and that they ever may, is the ſincere prayer of this abuſed writer.

He therefore hopes an acquittal from this part of his indictment.

Who this writer is *, does not concern the diſpute ; he does not remain concealed from any conſciouſneſs of deſerving the reproaches you have ſcattered in the dark ; but becauſe it is rather inconvenient for objectors and enquirers to declare themſelves, while any are liable to be inflated with that holy zeal (not according to knowledge)

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* The author, through miſinformation from perſons whom he had all reaſon to credit, was induced to publiſh an advertiſement reflecting on a gentleman in Worceſterſhire, falſely accuſed of induſtriouſly claiming the production of *the Hiſtory*. This report, like all other reports grew, from the circumſtance of that gentleman being known to have a manuſcript by him, on the ſame ſubject, and of the ſame nature. The writer having received full ſatisfaction as to this point, takes the preſent opportunity to acknowledge it : and to aſk that gentleman's pardon for being miſled by reports which certain perſons are ever ready to propagate, to the prejudice of the *proſcribed*.

knowledge) with which orthodox writers labour to puff them up. He never before was ſo inadvertent as to run his head into a waſp's neſt, and does not perceive the leaſt inclination ever again to repeat the experiment: but the humane can never ſurely blame him for endeavouring to heal the ſtings he has already received; and he has the pleaſure to aſſure them, that the ſmart is entirely ſubſided.

Religious conteſt is moſt diſagreeable of all other: ſince it has ever been leaſt deciſive; and moſt incentive of thoſe propenſities which the genuine dictates of pure religion directly tend to ſuppreſs. The writer, therefore, at the ſame time that he drops this controverſy, has no preſent intention ever more to engage in any of the like nature.

With regard to you, Sir! the author, by whom you have dealt ſo ſharply, retains not the leaſt trace of reſentment on that account: he is too well acquainted with the nature of religious zeal, not to make allowances for the violence of its operations, even in the moſt worthy breaſts. Fatal indeed to mankind is the violence of it, wherever it extends itſelf, and infects the government of a country! He is only ſorry

that you reduced him to the neceſſity of recriminating in a manner in which perſonal regard could not be preſerved. But he, nevertheleſs, hopes you will have the charity to believe his aſſurance that, with the greateſt eſteem for your learning and character,

March 12. 1762.

He remains, your ſincere, though unknown Friend.

POST-

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POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE writing the foregoing letter, the author has read a Vindication of David, in the name of Dr. Thomas Patten of Oxford. This reverend gentleman is for having the character of king David protected by the authority of the clergy in convocation *. A very ill-judged hint, to ſay no worſe of it: and far from being capable of anſwering the purpoſe of this miſtaken writer. The character of king David would have remained in as good a ſituation if Dr. Patten had excuſed himſelf this labour: for, notwithſtanding his addreſſing it to his Grace of Canterbury, notwithſtanding the aſſiſtance of a ſuperabundance of ſtaring capitals; it is doubtful whether the one or the other will ſtamp a currency on opinions above the ſtandard of their intrinſic value.

His weakneſs is in no inſtance more apparent than in his contemptuous mention of the Engliſh diſſenting miniſters. The hiſtorian, he ſays †,

'Pretends

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* Patten, page 3. † Page 25.

'Pretends to offer his performance to the pub-
'lic under the notion of a vindication of his late
'majeſty from the inſult which, as he contends,
'hath been offered to his memory by ſome re-
'verend panegyriſts, *ſo he ſtileth certain diſſenting*
'*teachers*, who it ſeems have been fond of com-
'paring him with king David; "a monarch"
'ſaith he, "in no reſpect reſembling him."

This gentleman, among other needful information, is to be told, that theſe diſſenting teachers are a very reſpectable body of men: men whoſe ſtudies are more ſuited to their profeſſion, and whoſe improvement in them have in general manifeſted them deſerving the epithet *reverend*, as much, to ſay the leaſt, as many collegians, himſelf in particular; who (bigots to eſtabliſhment) fondly conceive all ſenſe and learning confined within the limits of univerſities.

All that is contained in this pamphlet worthy notice, will be found conſidered in the foregoing letter: indeed, ſome advantages might be gained here if attended to, of no ſmall importance; ſuch as his ſuppoſition that the Jewiſh prophets might perhaps have had no ſubſiſtence but from providential preſents for their intelligence *: ſee how

* Page 34.

how Doctors can differ! his compariſon of David to Shakeſpeare's Macbeth *; 'whoſe cir-'cumſtances were ſomewhat ſimilar to thoſe of 'David:' his judicious and delicate compariſon † between reaſoners in religion, and urine doctors! his miſtake in the price of admiſſion into the worſhipful Robin Hood ſociety, which is a half-penny more than he has affirmed it to be ‡: all theſe, and many more which might be ſpecified, would furniſh a commentator with ſufficient matter for animadverſion. But it is loſt labour to argue with a divine who, through the whole tenor of his performance, has taken profeſſed pains to ſhew that he is not a proteſtant upon proteſtant principles: who, on the leaſt appearance of difficulty in expoſition, continually holds up the authority of a letter as yet unſettled, to cruſh the exertions of private judgment! *a conduct, which will ſupport the exploded doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation!* We ſhall never convince unbelievers by methods which even a Muſſelman may adopt in juſtification of his perſuaſion.

From

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* Page 102. † Page 127.

‡ Page 130. note. Poſſibly a penny, ſince the late riſe of porter.

From theſe premiſes, the writer declines the ſecond taſk of analyſing the contents of this vindication. Since, having undergone the toil of examining a far more elaborate work *, he will not ſpend more time on a perſon, who, like the frog in the fable, after much puffing and ſtraining, fancies himſelf an ox!

After what has been pleaded againſt the charges contained in the moſt capital performance on the defenſive ſide of this diſpute, it is hoped that the rev. meſſ. Porteus and Cleaver, will not continue to think this writer *quite* ſo unfair and abandoned as they have repreſented him to be.

The greateſt inſtance of moderation and generoſity of mind on the part of king David, is to be ſeen in a candid pamphlet juſt publiſhed, under the title of 'The Converſion of a Deiſt.' In ſome general Reflexions at the end of this piece, Mr. Harwood, the writer, takes occaſion to inſiſt ſtrongly on the neceſſity of diſtinguiſhing between what *is* chriſtianity, and what *is not* †: in order to the burning without ceremony thoſe loads

* It is probable from more tokens than one, that Dr. Patten has condeſcended ſometimes to plow with Dr. Chandler's heifer. † Page 71.

loads of hay and ſtubble under which profane hands have overwhelmed the Chriſtian religion: as our undiſcerning zeal for ſome peculiar noſtrums does but rivet prejudices the ſtronger againſt it. 'Who, for inſtance, ſays he, that valued his 'character as a rational and well-inſtructed 'Chriſtian, would ſit down to vindicate David 'from every charge advanced againſt his moral 'character in the late celebrated Hiſtory of the 'Man after God's own Heart?' Now, however, this gentleman differs from the writer of that hiſtory, in ſome points, it is hoped that by this time, whatever may be aſcribed to his ignorance, he will be acquitted of *malice*; with which all animadverters unite to accuſe him: and he ſincerely rejoiced to find Mr. Harwood join with him in conſidering Chriſtianity as entirely unconcerned in this diſpute.

What fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? and what communion hath light with darkneſs? 2 Cor. vi. 14.

FINIS.

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